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THE LIVING LAMB UPON THE CROSS

A bas-relief, probably of the fifth century. From the ciborium of the High Altar of St. Mark's, Venice.

[*Frontispiece.*

THE MOUNT OF VISION

BEING A STUDY OF LIFE
IN TERMS OF THE WHOLE

BY

CHARLES H. BRENT

BISHOP OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE BISHOP OF LONDON

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PROFERRE STUDUERUNT

1924
AUG

INTRODUCTION

It was by what the world would call Luck, but by what I feel to be Divine Providence, that I was asked to fix upon a writer for our Lenten book for 1918 on April 20, 1917. I was driving the author of this inspiring book, if I remember right, down to the great service which we held in St. Paul's Cathedral to commemorate the greatest event which has happened for 100 years—the entrance of the United States into the Great War for the Freedom of the World—a service at which Bishop Brent himself preached a striking sermon.

But for this I should not, I think, have had the presumption to ask so busy a man, and one so well known throughout the world, to write our Lenten book. However, as he is a dear personal friend of mine, I took my courage into both hands and asked him after the service to do so; he at once consented. This book is the result.

I shall not attempt to summarize its close reasoning and deep thinking. I can only say that its very title gives us the inspiration we need to-day.

If we only look at what is close at hand to-day, the bloodshed, the mourning and the tears, we

should be bound to be depressed, but, if we ascend the Mount of Vision, and see things in their true perspective against the background of the Character and the Purpose of God; if we see, as the Bishop so finely says, that the Cross is part of the *Character* of God, then we shall see life sanely, see it whole; things will fall into their true perspective; pain will be seen as part of Love and as a necessary condition of the new birth of the world; death will become "the last great adventure" (Chap. IX), and the whole of life will be seen as leading up to the completeness and symmetry of " a city that lieth foursquare" (Chap. X).

I commend, then, this book to the careful and prayerful study of my people during this coming Lent. Some may find it a little more difficult book than many that we have had written for us during past years, but it is none the worse for that, and its great spiritual value is most striking and undeniable; it is the work of a man who has lived out what he has written in his own life first, and I ask their prayers for the author, who left the manuscript of his book here on his way to the Front, to which he had been hastily summoned, that he may be long spared to carry on his splendid work.

A. F. London.

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PREFACE

It is a striking fact that two great workers for the blind, Samuel Gridley Howe and Julia Ward Howe, have associated the exercise of a high degree of sight with blindness and the blind. On the chime of bells of the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston, Massachusetts, which Dr. Howe founded, is inscribed: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord," being the opening line of Mrs. Howe's Battle-hymn of the Republic, which is the watchword for our times.

It is to the topmost peak of the Mount of Vision that we must struggle to-day. Fortitude is never blinded or stifled by the smoke of battle any more than it is dismayed by its carnage. Above the confusion and bewilderment of the moment soars God's ordered plan for His creation, which is not so complex or difficult as to be beyond man's comprehension, nor so remote as to be beyond his ken. Indeed, human life was constructed by its Architect to fit the plan, and the plan to fit human life. More than that, it is awaiting our individual and corporate recog-

nition for its effective inauguration. Without man's co-operation God's operation falls short of its aim.

The first step toward achievement is the exercise from the highest vantage ground of our power of vision. There can be no future for us without it. Where there is no vision the people perish. Sight, that most royal of endowments, is ours wherewith to grasp God's purpose for creation and for ourselves as creation's climax and crown. The eye, whether of the body or of the soul, can lay hold of immensities with the same facility as it lays hold of trifles. It is our privilege and duty to live in the future as much as in the present through our inner faculty of sight, by means of which we draw the contents of to-morrow into to-day. Foresight, which simply means looking as far as we can ahead, is not merely an encouragement to cheer us on our way, but is achievement by anticipation. The seers of old made it possible for Christ to come by rousing expectancy through their vision of His coming. They prepared a path for His feet as surely as the road-makers build a highway for traffic. Upon our ability to-day to see life steadily and to see it whole hangs the fate of the world.

This does not mean that we must hysterically

seize upon all that is smiling and cheering, to dangle it before the aching eyes of men. Unreasoning optimism, the child of lopsided knowledge, is unwarranted and, in its dire effect, a running mate of despair. God gives us twin organs of sight that we may see evenly, and, that the one eye may act as a check on, as well as a companion of, its fellow. There is similar balance provided for our inner power of vision. The man who saw most clearly the beauty and grandeur and symmetry of God and God's universal plan was the same who saw in the vision of Revelation the ugliness and horror and disorder involved in the process of working it out. Dante, the greatest interpreter of life since Apostolic days, went through Hell and Purgatory before he reached Paradise. It is the sentimentalists who read out of the Divine scheme what is uncomfortable, much more what is terrible. This they do because their conception of God is weak and incomplete.

Probably the gravest fault of which the majority are guilty in their mode of approach to life is what is called selfishness in the individual, provincialism or insularity in social matters, and sectarianism in religion. They are all devotees of the cult of the incomplete. More often this cult has to do with a faulty use of vision than

with defective sight. All that is needed to change many a life from darkness to light, from fear to courage, from defeat to victory is a lifting of the eyelids. When God opened the eyes of the young man by Elisha's side, he saw that man's plan of destruction was dwarfed into insignificance in the light of God's plan of protection. We need to rub the cobwebs of prejudice from our eyes as a preliminary to any survey of the landscape, so that we may see that which is, rather than the reflection of our own ideas. Prejudice is the beginning of self-inflicted blindness. Men choose to take partial views of life to suit their whim and fancy. Catholicity has nothing to recommend it unless it is the condition in which everything is measured and considered in terms of the whole. There is no graver offence than to use a catholic garment to hide a sectarian heart. Partial views may result in all the difference between darkness and light, between a curse and a blessing, as the classic story of Balaam and Balak testifies.

One of the curious things in human experience is that the power to see far and deep, certainly in the case of leaders in sight, seems to be sharpened rather than dimmed by darkness. When Christ in vivid language depicted just such days of gloom as we are going through, He made

them a call to expectancy and announced them to be in themselves a Mount of Vision: When these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh. Hope almost ceases to be a virtue when all conditions are propitious. It is like a candle in the sunlight. The fairest songs ever sung are those which so far from being silenced are quickened by a furnace of hostile flame. It was when John, the Beloved Disciple, was in exile for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus that he became John the Seer. Of the seers of pre-Christian days, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, and Isaiah to go no further, each had his most brilliant vision when he was in a hard place. Coming to later times, it was in a cemetery during the throes of Civil War that Lincoln caught his immortal glimpse of democracy. In brief, the highest mountains of vision, in a spiritual sense, are frequently if not always deep valleys.

So we are to-day on a Mount of Vision of a towering sort. Our very gloom is a call to declare our untrammelled freedom. We must use our eyes and lay hold of visions that will disclose our present duty and be an instrument of emancipation into a higher order and a better world. Our courage is going to be severely

taxed. Whatever things can be shaken in the whole human structure are being shaken, and are tottering to inevitable ruin. We must be prepared to see much fall and disappear that we cling to and cherish. God has permitted this universal earthquake in order that we may be forced to do that which our self-satisfaction has restrained us from doing—that we may rearrange the true factors of life on a larger plan and in truer perspective. Too many of us are settling down into a process of viewing all things in terms of the existing disorder. We colour our whole outlook with its red dye. Whereas the war is a momentary phase of a disease which was just as grave an evil before it broke out in a rash as since. The wrath of the cancer is in its roots rather than where its teeth have gnawed the surface of the flesh.

The war is to be viewed without dismay, like all other incidents, in terms of the whole of God's plan. It is not putting it too strong to say that our chief obligation is to conserve and develop life so successfully that victory, when it comes, will be justified by the heightened value of society for which we are fighting. Our struggle is not to recall the past; it is not worth recalling.

Through the purging of destruction we are

endeavouring to insure a future for the world which will be true to the principles with which we have trifled or half-embodied in what we call Christendom or Christian civilization. It is for the ideal upon which progressive society is built rather than the incomplete manner in which hitherto it has found expression that we are contending.

The aim of my book is to make a contribution to this end. No least individual is exempt from the responsibility of straining to see and share in God's big plans for the part and for the whole, for the individual and for society. From the Mount of Vision we shall take large views and always treat the part in terms of the whole. In this way we shall study the groundwork of God's character, His self-identification with the human race, the basic plan of His creation, the place of suffering in the Divine Life and the universal scheme of things, the individual in his social setting, the nation in its relation to mankind, the significance of democracy, the Church or society organized in God, its representative literature, its saving treasure of forgiveness, its nourishing activities, its illumination by education of the whole man, its privilege of comradeship with yesterday, to-day and for ever, and the last great adventure.

In order not to break the continuity of the text I am minimizing quotation marks and footnotes. Frequently I have used the thought of other men, framed in my own language. After all, originality of thought has long since been exhausted, and in so far as it still exists it is but the passing of ancient verities through fresh personality.

These pages cannot but be closely and happily associated with America Day, April 20, 1917. At the close of the memorable service in St. Paul's Cathedral on that date, while the words of the Battle Hymn of the Republic were still ringing in our ears, the Bishop of London asked me to write a book for his people for Lent of the following year. I undertake the responsibility as a service of love rendered in behalf of the Christian Church in America to the Christian Church in England. It is ambitious in scope, and I only wish that time and conditions would allow me to give it the attention it merits. It has been thought out during journeys by land and sea, the preliminary draft having been sketched while travelling on horseback over the mountains of Luzon. These very words are being penned at a resthouse in a remote cañon to the accompaniment of the music of the little rivers that run among the hills.

The book is not of the stereotyped Lenten pattern, but I trust that it will none the less on that account prove of service in welding human life to God and to His will, which, as I understand it, the Lenten season inspires us to do. Part of our Lord's Lent at least was spent on a Mount of Vision, where He saw the evil and chose the good.

CHARLES H. BRENT.

BUTAC, P. I.,
4 *September*, 1917.

NOTE

The writer wishes to thank Professor W. R. Sorley for permission to quote, on page 83, a sonnet by his son, Charles Hamilton Sorley, from *Marlborough and Other Poems*.

DEUS QUI OMNIPOTENTIAM TUAM PARCENDO MAXIME ET MISERANDO MANIFESTAS MULTIPLICA SUPER NOS MISERICORDIAM TUAM UT AD TUA PROMISSA CURRENTES COELESTIUM BONORUM FACIAS ESSE CONSORTES PER DOMINUM NOSTRUM JESUM CHRISTUM

THE MOUNT OF VISION

I

THE GROUNDWORK OF GOD'S CHARACTER

It is a just complaint against every existing phase of religion that it lacks in dynamic force expressing itself in that supreme degree of character which theoretically we all admit to be within the reach of the least and lowliest. The situation is all the more alarming because idealism in every conceivable form walks openly in our streets and decks itself in attractive garb. Now it appeals to us in the polished language of intellectual culture, now in the tempestuous oratory of emotional fervour, now in the clear-cut terms of ecclesiastical dogma. But the result is ineffective. It is not merely that society as a whole pursues a course of gilded paganism, but also—and this is the serious thing—that the Churches which proclaim holiness as their chief programme fail to deliver this treasure to those who truly hunger and thirst after righteousness. If the ecclesiastic lays it to the charge

of the disciple that the fault is due to his apathetic reception of the truth, the disciple can justly retort that it is rather due to the apathetic, incomplete and uninspiring presentation of the truth. There are saints and many of them, thank God! But for the most part they are of the hidden sort. It is they who are the saving element in Christian society. An honest mind cannot fail to be perturbed because in the ranks of spiritual leaders there are so few who achieve great heights of moral and spiritual character. The Churches for the most part in their organic life accept average standards as being satisfactory. Most of them are controlled by gusts of thought and devotion. Some one produces a single phase of truth or of virtue or of both, and sets it walking down the public highway arm in arm with the Gospel, proclaiming it to be the whole instead of a meagre part of God's revelation. A crowd gathers and a following is created. The pathetic spectacle of arrested development is one of the commonest incidents of religious history. A catchword not only catches but also imprisons its victim. May it not be that in this readiness to accept a part for the whole is the cause of our spiritual slackness and stunted growth? We slight our capacity grievously when we allow ourselves to be satisfied with half-truths and

isolated virtues. And we discredit the veracity and the capability of God Himself when we let our standards for the individual and for the social whole fall short of the rich expectations and promises with which He has strewn the ages.

It is one thing to recognize unpalatable fact as undeniable, and quite another to surrender ourselves to it as inevitable. Christianity demands of us honesty and reality as our primary volitional disposition, preparatory to our arming for battle and deploying our forces to win a victory over the average, as well as over the positively evil. It is fatalism that rests satisfied with the result of effort whatever that result may be. The one justification of Christianity is its unquenchable thirst for the best, its determined claim upon completeness according to God's explicit plan. It is necessary to say this in view of the recognition of the failure of Christians to be Christian, a recognition to which we are driven by the spectacle of modern life within and without the Churches. The duty of living men is to wipe out the blot which stains our generation. If historians of the future are compelled by the facts of the case to say that we split mankind into warring fragments by submission to the average and by devotion to the incomplete, it is incumbent upon us to com-

pel them to add that we recognized our culpability and its cause, and that we flung ourselves adventurously in the direction of the complete.

The little Christian can, of course, pursue his little way in the seclusion of his sect, polishing his self-conscious culture and resting satisfied in his puny ideas of God and mankind. But we must try to drive him out of his small ways. We must rouse him to acceptance of massive responsibility for the betterment of Christendom, responsibility which will not break but which will make him. He must be shaken out of his prejudices into the broad freedom of fairness. All this can be accomplished without any sacrifice of that fine carving of character which Christian culture demands. Indeed, large views of life give new point and interest to moral and spiritual effort. The individual is revealed to be not an isolated statue but a pillar builded into a stately temple. Salvation of self is impossible without the intention to save society.

Is it unfair to say that the conventional Lenten appeal is largely ineffective in that it drives men too exclusively into the depressing realm of self-criticism looking toward self-improvement without at the same time letting loose upon them the whole flood of inspiring truth? It is a deepening consciousness of what God is and of what

He expects and why, that alone can make penitence bear permanent fruit. We must have at hand a mountain of vision to climb as well as a valley in which to descend. There are two ways of progress, the self-conscious and the self-unconscious. The former lays emphasis on direct attack, the latter upon indirect attack. The one compels, the other invites. The one looks chiefly at self, the other looks chiefly at God. The former, unless it has the latter as its substructure, creates at best an unjoyous character; the latter, if it steadfastly refuses to sacrifice detail in its loyalty to vastness, walks with gleaming eye and buoyant step straight toward the goal. The purpose of these pages is to help men to a mountain top, where perhaps the vision will serve to make them remember themselves by forgetting themselves and find themselves by losing themselves in God and God's plan for them.

I

The beginning and the end of everything is to be found in God. He is the Author of life. It is He, therefore, who has supreme authority over us, for authority is the just prerogative and right of an author. From Him we came, in Him, consciously or unconsciously, we live,

to Him we go. As a mere First Cause we may study Him out of sheer curiosity, but we are under no obligation to do so. Purely impersonal things are of only secondary importance to persons. But a First Cause who is responsible for the existence of personality must and does include and contain in Himself, in addition perhaps to much else, all that personality means and connotes. Possibly it is quite legitimate to speak of God as Personality—not as *a* Personality—though it is more accurate to think of Him as being the source of personality. The point to grasp is that in His creation of us He established a relationship between Himself and us which is organic, and which we are bound to perpetuate by the deliberate purpose of our wills. It is not we who by the action of our minds create God after our own image, but it is God who has created us after His image to be conformed to His likeness. Having created us, He clings to us in protective and formative love, looking for responsive and co-operative effort on our part.

Of course the greatest operative force in and behind life is God. Second to it comes our practical (as distinguished from our theoretical) conception of God, energized by faith declaring itself in works. God's plans, powerful as they

are, are dependent for ultimate success on our energizing of them. Thy kingdom come, is impossible without, Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven. A wrong conception of God must mean a wrong conception of life. A partial, that is to say a sectarian, view of God issues in a mutilated view of life. Augustine, at a moment when his morals were corrupt said that his error was his God. He would seem to mean that there was a close and logical connection between what he thought of God's character and what he made of his own.

This is always and inevitably so. It is belief that rules the controlling faculties of man. If in our heart of hearts we think of God as mere justice, we will become mere slaves of duty or else try to run away from His wrath in bitter revolt. If we view Him as a revealer of ideals only, and not also as the force available to mankind to bring them to good effect, we will lapse into moral dreamers and be satisfied with thinking good rather than being and doing it. What we need is a whole conception of God, or a conception of whole God. This is not something which we can achieve in a single convulsive effort. But we must try to get a clear view of the groundwork of God's character on which to work out our personal relationship with Him.

That is the first and the important thing. Knowledge is a growth not an act. This is peculiarly true of fellowship between persons. To rest in one idea of God is to rest in error. We must move into new phases of His life incessantly, never allowing ourselves to confuse our conception of Him with Him. We must accept the penalty of possessing personality.

It has happened that, owing to the development of the modern nation, we have been accepting a national interpretation of God's character as being complete. In addition to the disablement resulting from this provincialism, we have had the conflicting ideas of Him promoted by the numerous Churches, no one of which is unbiased. The real reason why Christendom is divided is because of diverse and static conceptions of God.

It has been rightly maintained—and this is the meaning of catholicity—that safety so far as fundamentals are concerned is to be found in the universal. That which belongs to the totality of the ages is dependable, and gives us secure foothold for personal experience. There is such a thing as the groundwork of God's character. Upon it rests all else in eternity and time. It is the source from which reality flows, the foundation on which it stands.

It is permanent and unchangeable. No opinion of ours can alter it. The most that a wrong conception of it can do is to help or hinder its complete working in the person who entertains the conception.

Because the groundwork of God's character is final, the most important errand in life is to discover and claim it as a personal possession after which to model the groundwork of our own character. The knowledge of God is not only life but also the highest kind of life, life eternal. Our working capital is our operative belief, our success as immortals rises and falls according to the measure of the knowledge of God there is in us. There is no possible escape from the unassailable logic of our Lord's conclusion: This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

II

Some one [1] has finely, and, as it would seem, truly intimated that the groundwork of God's character is the Cross. Thinking, as is our custom, in terms of time, we may have reached the

[1] E. Herman in the *Meaning and Value of Mysticism*, the reading of which has coloured much that these pages contain.

conclusion that it eventually became so, rather than that it was always so. A moment's reflection shows us that this could not be. We human beings are, or ought to be, becoming that which we as yet are not. God is only what He ever was. Revelation is never the taking on by God of some fresh attribute. It is the unveiling to our eyes of that which He always was, but which hitherto we have been unable to see. God lives in the present tense, so that it is always fitting to declare of Him that which is to be in the language of now. His completeness is not fluid. When once He has declared Himself there is no mistake to be corrected, no false expression to be recalled. This is equally true to the facts of historic revelation and of the progressive manifestations of God in individual experience. There may be expansion and development in the sense of our receiving larger views of unchanging reality. But God can never become in essence that which He has not always been. If in these pages words may at times be used as though their writer were oblivious to or forgetful of the fact, the real explanation is to be found in the inadequacy of language for the sublime task that has been set it. It is stimulating and provocative of spiritual effort to remember that our capacity is the full knowledge

of God, that growing capacity involves growing knowledge, full capacity full knowledge.

We cannot afford to ignore or depreciate any revelation of God in the whole stretch of history of which the Bible is the representative volume. Men talk as though there were an Old Testament and a New Testament God, two distinct and somewhat contradictory beings. The Old Testament God *is* the New Testament God, the difference being that God, as revealed in the New Testament, is but the God of old with completer light shed upon His character. The groundwork of His character can be expressed in terms of the Cross in latter times only because it has always been in the form of the Cross. The Cross represents self-giving to the uttermost, with everything that dares to limit or aims to thwart it, defeated and destroyed. All else must be painted in on this background.

It is obligatory that personality, if it gives as personality, gives itself with and in its other gifts. God's first gift to man was His own nature. God identified man with Himself when He made him in His own image. All subsequent revelation is built on this great fact. God's a mightiness, His holiness, His justice, His mercy rest upon His self-giving to the uttermost. Another word for self-giving is service, and he

who serves is a servant. It is startling but true to maintain that God has been, fundamentally and always, a servant, the servant of man. We call Him love. Service is love in active, intelligent operation.

From the beginning the claim on man for service by God has been based upon the service of man by God with the fulness of His nature. There has never been a moment in which God has expected or exacted from man anything which He Himself is not or does not. Having made us in the image of Himself, He could do nothing short of requiring us to live up to the inherent requirements of the Divine character. His struggle with the human race has been, and is, a struggle to identify, in all respects, the life of man with the life of God, individually and corporately. If we complain that too much is expected of us and that the strain is excessive, reduced to its final elements our complaint is that we are made in God's image. God being what He is could not have made man anything but what he is.

III

It is customary to think of God as made known in the Old Testament as chiefly the God of might, holiness unapproachable, and

austerity. But surely He is also portrayed there as the God of passionate gentleness and unspeakable patience. No literature in the world can produce such a splendour of compassion as shines from the pages of the Old Testament. Its groundwork is shaped in the form of a Cross, and the chief sufferer depicted is not man but God. His kingliness, His justice, His holiness, His almightiness are each and all called in to do men service. More than that, they are revealed to be the attributes of God, not in terms of formal theology but in the main in those of vivid, human experience looking toward the well-being of the race. The recognition of God as He is is required of us in order that we may become what we may be. There is no other route or method. God has bound up His fortunes, so to speak, with ours in the act of creation. It is not merely that our life must rise or fall with God's, but, as the experience of the Son of God as the Son of Man declares, God's life rises and falls with ours. All this the Old Testament shows. It was for that reason that it was written. It is stupid, self-conscious pride that leads us to think that God has told us the story of His life and being through history for His own aggrandizement. Our ways are not God's ways, our thoughts are not God's thoughts.

When God reveals Himself as King, He does so to establish the heights and depths of His service. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. It is "unto us" that all this is. And note the element of giving or service in every member of His five-fold name. He ministers to the ecstatic part of our being as He flashes Himself before us in the baffling, dazzling, beckoning glory of Divine mystery: He is Wonderful. He sets flowing manward the flood of His wisdom, which is as honey to the mouth and as sunshine to the mind: He is Counsellor. He upholds with the unexcelled might of Supreme Sovereignty the fate of men and things; He is Mighty God. His character as the author and sustainer of His children is for ever and ever: He is Everlasting Father. He is dispenser and steward of that which is deeper than joy and as stable as eternity among the storm-tossed sons of mortality: He is Prince of Peace. Such is one flashlight vision of the God of the Old Testament.

Again, where can be found in human language a fairer picture of hovering solicitude, rivalling maternal tenderness than this?

The Lord's portion is his people:
Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.
He found him in a desert land
And in the waste howling wilderness:
He compassed him about, he cared for him,
He kept him as the apple of his eye:
As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
That fluttereth over her young.
He spread abroad his wings, he took them,
He bare them on his pinions.

And who were the people whom He thus treated? Why just the same sort as ourselves, a people void of understanding, a perverse and crooked generation. Yet He was their Rock, a God of faithfulness and without iniquity. Just and right is He. This great song of Moses might belong to the repertory of the Christian mystics. It suggests the lovely language of Julian of Norwich: "This is a sovereign friendship of our courteous Lord that He keepeth us so tenderly while we be in sin; and furthermore He touches us full privily and sheweth us our sin by the sweet light of mercy and grace."

Just as the kingliness of God finds expression in royal service, so the humility of God descends to such depths of service that extremes meet, and in its own might it scales the absolute heights, and we learn that lowliness is the most regal of God's attributes. He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted

with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet did we esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way: and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

God, yes God, is on the Cross for the Cross is the groundwork of His being and always has been so. In His people He has always suffered in their sufferings with a degree of suffering that surpassed theirs. The pangs of time in their manifold and multitudinous manifestations dart through the eternal nature of God. God has made common lot with man.

O God, I praise Thee for Thy love—that which Thou art and without which Thou couldst not be God of man. Thy love controls and shapes Thy power so that Thy almighty hand never slips in its creative task but makes and moulds all things well. Thy love melts Thy disciplines into the gold of spiritual treasure, and distils the soft rain of compassion from the clouds of trouble. Nothing can escape the transfiguring touch of Thy love, love finding utterance in lowly, regal service. Under its reign the darkness becomes as the light, and the unseemly face of evil flees away in shame and defeat. O God, I praise Thee for Thy love which bathes mankind and me, even me.

II

THE SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF GOD WITH MAN

We are not trying to reach a complete analysis of the character of God. The very effort would involve such a discrediting and belittling of His nature as would undeify Him. "The consciouness of the depth and mysteriousness of life and reality is ever with it, *as* religion, from first to last. 'How unsearchable are God's judgments, and His ways past finding out!' and 'One of the greatest favours bestowed on the soul in this life' (thus like to the blessed in heaven) 'is to enable it to see so distinctly, and to feel so profoundly, that it cannot comprehend God.' These exclamations of the intensely ontological [*i.e.* devoted to the science of being and its analysis] St. Paul and of the Spanish peasant St. John of the Cross, merely express, respectively, the very soul of religion and a delicate concomitant of all its deepest experiences." The charm of science, art, literature, mathematics, theology or what not consists not in its finalities but in its infinitudes,

not in what we have attained in them but in what always lies beyond, not in rest but in motion, not in endings but in beginnings. Mystery is not incompatible with the familiarity of comradeship. The best comrade is the deepest rather than the shallowest. Of course if God were mere mind, mere mind might measurably compass Him if it were fashioned after His image, or, if He were mere personality, mere personality might fathom Him if our personality were patterned on the scale of His. But in God there is that which we call eternal and infinite, and which baffles us while it delights us.

It is necessary to remember this lest by too exclusive a devotion to Jesus of the Gospels we shut out the full vision of God's fascinating mysteriouness. Our Lord is the Word of God in His final essence and also with reference to His intelligibleness to man. The same who is the Word is also, in the awed language of the mystics, Silence. In the seeker after God there are always heights hidden not in the clouds but in the climbing, limitless blue above and beyond us. The immanent loses itself in the transcendent. The truest and only reverent agnostic is the devout believer. He alone can say that in knowing Him he discovers, not in despair but in palpitating joy, that he knows so little of Him in

whom there is so much to know that it is as though he as yet knew Him not.

"Mad is he who hopes that our reason may compass that infinitude which one substance in three persons fills. Be ye content, O human race, with *quia!* For if ye had been able to see the whole, no need was there for Mary to give birth."

I

The Old Testament leaves no doubt as to the shape of the life of God. It is in the form of the Cross. "The Cross is not an afterthought of God—a heroic remedy for a desperate emergency—but the corner-stone of creation." Consequently when the Word speaks in language intelligible to the human race He speaks according to this unvarying pattern. The Cross is the chief eternal symbol in time. Like the Chinese ideograph it always presents the one idea under whatever terminology the human tongue may give it voice. God is in the deepest foundations of His being a servant. Whenever and however He speaks the accents of service are in His voice. Even in the fragmentary utterances caught by the dimmest religions, there is a faint murmur at least of His inmost self. Nothing that history has produced casts doubt on what St. Paul said:

The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity. And what the same Apostle said to the men of Athens could be said to any untutored and unevangelized people with some measure of appropriateness. If men live and move and have their being in Him, He is their perpetual servant.

It is a mistake to think that when Jesus came into the world God for the first time entered upon and fulfilled a period of service begun in Bethlehem and terminated on Calvary. God's service in the very nature of things must be limited by our acceptance; God's teaching is hidden except to the extent that His pupils are students. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.

The Incarnation is a reiteration of revelation already given, not less than a new and unique manifestation of the Divine life and character. It is the most eloquent language of love and service, the self-identification of God with us human folk. It is God throwing off all reserve, so to speak,

and laying bare His heart for all to behold. It is the dramatic acting out of His character under the sun, suiting his method to the simplest understanding and the greatest culture at a single stroke. Having identified man with Himself in the original creative act or process, He now identifies Himself with man in this creative act or process. And yet all the while He is and does nothing new, though in and through Him all things are made new. It behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself have suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

The exact words of Scripture are used here and elsewhere not because of any devotion to the literal language of the Bible, or because Biblical quotation is itself considered final, but because they are so perfect an expression of the thought to be conveyed that there could be no improvement on them.

In all literature I know of no passage of the sort that can parallel the kenotic (*i.e.* self-emptying) paragraph. Listen to its stately, thrilling tones! Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the

form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross, wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every-name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The service of God, in Jesus Christ, takes definite human shape. The eternal Cross forms itself into the Cross of Calvary. God's coming in the Incarnation must have been what it was. In no other way could He come except as a servant. The human form corresponded exactly with the Divine reality. The servant, wherever and under whatever guise He is, must always be the servant. To call God servant is not to depreciate Divinity. Rather is it to dignify service. If service be the occupation of God, it cannot be an occupation unworthy of man. To be a servant is another way of expressing likeness to God, kingliness, greatness, manliness.

II

The groundwork of the character of Jesus Christ is the Cross, because the Cross is the groundwork of the character of God. It is chosen on earth because it is inherent in heaven. But Jesus Christ did not, during His earthly career, exhibit all that God is. Neither the Almightiness of God, nor His Omniscience were exercised by Him. This is not to say that they were altered in substance or degree. As to how they were held in abeyance, no one can tell. The object and end of the Incarnation was exactly what the object and end of all God's previous revelations was—insistence upon the self-giving character of God's nature. It was exhibited in order that human capacity and the laws that govern human life might be clearly illustrated—in short, it was exhibited because God could not help it and remain God. With God can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

So we find God stating in the person and the conduct and the words of Jesus Christ what all revelation up to that time had declared Him to be. Fire from on high had not yet been kindled in men. Flashes from heaven had made but fitful and momentary flame. Now heaven

presses itself so closely into earth that the one mingles with the other. If God were to do things *for* us only and not also *in* and *with* us, our outlook would be hopeless. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love because He first loved us.

In thinking of self-giving in relation to pain, we must not make the mistake of thinking that suffering is always and everywhere necessary to service. Certainly it is not its dominant note. In that self-giving is the chief law of God's being, in it is His supreme bliss. Though somehow, in a way that does not appear to the human mind, suffering has its roots and origin in God, it is only as a process of love, so that—

Love's very pain is sweet.

The Cross as the groundwork of God's character is painless so far as it is the expression of His inmost desire and purpose. It has no more pain in it than the surrender of a bride to the encompassing love of her betrothed, than the outpuring of a mother's love upon a reciprocating child. But there is a suffering imported into God's self-giving by us creatures of time.

Self-will, that is, the power of our free choice exercised away from self-giving or service, is erected

as a barrier to the fulfilment of God's purpose for and in and with us, and the floodgates of suffering and tragedy are thereby opened on God and the race. It is our rejection and repudiation of Him that makes the Cross a torturing thing. No one who has struggled to express his life in terms of self-giving finds it a burden or a pain. Service which finds its mark and is accepted loses the very memory of this effort and suffering through which it reached its goal. Better still the memory of the suffering ceases to have any suffering in it and becomes an actual ingredient of joy.

Whether then it is of God's life through the ageless ages, or during the thirty-three years when He tabernacled in the flesh of our mortality, that we are thinking, the only suffering which was not an inherent part of joy, which was scalding and bitter and torturing in His self-giving, was (and is) the direct result of human self-will.

III

Self-giving reaches its climax in the self-identification of the one who loves with those who are loved. There is nothing beyond this height for God or man. God made us His neighbour. He loves us as Himself. Then He made

Himself our neighbour and asked us to love Him as ourselves. He loves us with all His might and expects of us only the same treatment that we receive from Him. The first and great commandment—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind—is not arbitrary or one-sided but invitatory and reciprocal. Did Our Lord Jesus Christ do anything less in His love toward mankind? The Son of God as the Son of Man acted out the Second Commandment in making known the first—or vice versa, if you choose. Is there anything conceivable worthy the name of love which would add to the perfection of the love of Jesus Christ and which He failed to exhibit? If there is I know it not.

In the creation God identified man with Himself by making him in His own image: in the re-creation He identified God with man by the great incarnate act. This was done not so as to merge and confuse the Divine and the human, but with due recognition of both. Manhood stands out with new distinction and distinctness on the background of God because and by means of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is order and symmetry as well as vastness and mystery. It is the recognition of a whole where everyone and everything has place, from God to a sparrow

and from man to a lily. It is a condemnation of sectionalism and self-will, self-will that is not merely evil but the chief and fruitful source of all evil. The whole of God's scheme is unrolled and exalted. The greatness of the least is proclaimed by recognizing the little child, the abandoned sinner, the grass of the field, each as being important, and bearing such a relation to the whole as to have the constant personal consideration of God Himself. In the light of the Incarnation we come to know that the quivering leaf is organically related to the quivering star, and that unity of purpose and of life is the energizing force of the universe. When mankind shall have come to an effective recognition of this fact there will be no more war, and tears and sin and death will flee away.

The only difference between chaos and order is that the constituent elements in the one are actuated by antagonisms and in the other by affinities. Order everywhere takes its beginning in mutual understanding. It is not mechanical but organic. The whole gives of its vitality to the parts not by cogs but by arteries. The parts fulfil their duty to the whole by functional loyalty that does not usurp the office of neighbouring parts in performing their own tasks.

It may be a startling, though I hope not an

inaccurate or irreverent, way to express it, but God in order to make clear the unity of Himself and His universe did not, could not rest content with being immanent in it, and in Jesus Christ He became, or revealed Himself to be, part of it. Self-identification could rise no higher or reach no further than the Incarnation rises and reaches. I am the Vine: ye are the branches. Abide in Me and I in you. We are members of His body. He is a true member of the human family, albeit the chief member, the Head. We are to grow up in all things into Him, which is the head of the Church; from Whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

Translated into Christian terms, the words of Marcus Aurelius compass the thought—

I am at one with everything, O Universe, which is well-fitting in thee,
Nothing to me is early or late which is timely with thee,
All is fruit to me that thy seasons bring.
O Nature, from thee are all things, in thee are all things, to thee all things return,
The poet saith, Dear city of Cecrops; shall not I say, Dear City of God? [1]

[1] Bridge's translation.

There are other methods of stirring life God-ward which is its goal, but none to match the simple exposition of God's movement manward. The cold spear-prick of duty can drive, and some natures become and do marvellous things under its compulsion, but man cannot live on commandments even when they are uttered by God. They must be moved by a force that inspires and inflames. By His self-identification with man, God has solved the problem. This can be said in all sincerity in the face of a world in disorder and of a Church in tattered fragments. The Spirit of God is brooding over the face of our troubled waters.

O God, I praise Thee for the gift of Jesus Christ, Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him were all things created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible; all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body of the Church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell. Now unto our God and Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

III

THE LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN

It is not a true distinction to differentiate between Jesus of Nazareth, the man of history who figured in His generation similarly to Julius Cæsar or Shakespeare, and the Christ of the ages who startled Paul into flaming belief, and whom the exiled theologian, John, saw walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. You might as well call a man a personality wholly apart from the boy he was and who is still part of him. But it is a mistake, a mistake fruitful of grave results, to fix exclusive attention on the Jesus of the Gospels. It is an aspect of resting in a part as though it were the whole.

There is also a converse error, that of giving oneself up to a contemplation of the Christ of faith and experience to a degree that eventuates in the wildest vagaries of pseudo-mysticism, or claims as development that which has as little affinity to the Gosepl seed as a head of wheat has to an acorn. There is perfect unity in all God's operations in time. He has never changed

His mind, He has never made a false move, He has never had to retrace His steps. His self-manifestation in pre-Christian days, in the times of Jesus of Nazareth and in all subsequent centuries has been consistent throughout in substance and method. It is all part of a great whole, its only variation being one of degree. He is more to-day than He was yesterday not because He has added to Himself or His efforts but because we have added to the energy and reality of our faith, which is co-operative acceptance of God. Not only does God not contradict Himself but He also does not repeat Himself. The old is ever becoming new under His touch either by coming to fresh maturity or else by transfiguration.

I would make here a passionate plea for a whole Bible, Apocrypha and all. More than that, a Bible which is but the beginning of a Christian library, Divine and human, and which will rest not on a lonely table as a thing apart, but which will rub covers with Dante and Bacon and the sages of the Orient, and be the richer and the more masterful because of its company on a crowded shelf. The Bible, in one sense, is a new starting-point for literature. Its last book launches us out into unlived centuries, just as the Old Testament carries us into past and

representative history. The Bible is a prelude, not a conclusion. Its last words are against incompleteness and in defence of wholeness. The context of the Bible is the immortal literature of the ages, past, present and future. The context of Jesus of Nazareth is the God of old times, He of the hoary locks, the Ancient of Days, and the God of now, the Son of Man with eyes as a flame of fire, the Spirit of God and of Christ who animates the Church. God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, whether we view Him as Javeh or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit or the Triune.

In dealing with the Bible we must remember about revelation that it was not given to a book but to men. The book that contains the record of it is very sacred, but it is, after all, but a book. It can leap into life only when it is poured through man. The Bible without a Divine Society to guard and interpret and vivify it is not necessarily an open or life-giving book.

I

The Book of Revelation begins exactly as a logically-minded man would expect it to begin from a knowledge of Gospel history. Where the biography of an ordinary man closes or retreats

into the unexplored shadows, that of Jesus breaks out afresh. "It is after the Saviour's death that men are mostly saved"—this not by reverting to what He has done but by what He continues to do on the basis of what He has done. A Saviour's march is ever onward, impeded by death as little as by life. The Cross of Calvary saves, yes, but only so far as it is identified with that eternal Cross which is the groundwork of the character of God, that self-giving, that self-identification of God with man, which flows as continually from the heart of God as the spring from a perennial source. Salvation cannot be mechanical, for God is not a machine dealing with machines. He is the source of personality dealing with persons. Salvation may begin with a touch, but it must continue in a relationship where there is a perpetual and mutual flow of confidences, from the Saviour to the saved, and from the saved to the Saviour.

John, the Seer, introduces us to the Christ beyond the veil. There He is, unchanged except for the glory of His cumulative experience! The manhood is there, transfigured as manhood must be transfigured that has victoriously passed through crises like death and resurrection and ascension. He is doing what we would expect

Him to be doing. He is moving about among men, commending and nurturing what is good in them, condemning and scorning what is evil, and making the heavens echo with marvellous promises to those who overcome. The mind travels back through the centuries to the God of the Psalmist who is gracious and full of compassion, or to the God of Isaiah who promised to those who would put away their evil doings that though their sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they should be as wool, or to God the Law Giver who proclaimed penalties for transgression in the same breath with rewards for obedience.

It is an easy and natural journey from the complete understanding by the Figure of Revelation of the character and conduct of the Seven Churches to the complete understanding of the Nazarene who read men as an open book, for He knew all men, and needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man. Repeatedly He connects Himself with His past—He claims to be the first and the last, which was dead and is alive for evermore, the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

II

In the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation is the figure of one like unto a Son of Man, and His messages hold our attention. Then with the door opened in heaven Christological thought mounts into pure theology. No more do we see the commanding presence of Christ in glory. Instead there is a throne set in heaven, and One sitting upon the throne. We are ushered into the audience chamber of God Himself. In the midst of the throne and of animated and of intelligent nature there is a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain. With the Lamb and with Him alone rests the ability and the right to open the Book of Life and reveal its contents and meaning. The Seer, fearful that there was no one worthy the task, was told that one there was of leonine strength and courage and of royal lineage, who could open the book and break the seals. He looked for this superb being, and lo! it was a Lamb with the marks of past death, violent death, upon it.

The transition is instantaneous and illuminating. It is one of those fine paradoxes with which the lips of Christ were familiar—eternal gain by temporal loss, life by way of death, acquisition by meekness. The Lion of Judah was there in the

Lamb. How? Because the Almightiness of God is as much in His meekness and lowliness as in the irresistible force by which He spins the world and upholds the universe.

There is a measure of magnificence in the words of one of the Church's prayers[1] which is brought out only when they are illumined by the Lion that is a Lamb—O God, who declarest thy almighty power most chiefly, supremely [*maxime*] in showing mercy and pity [*parcendo et miserando*]. In the presence of the Lion which is a Lamb we can venture on the passionate petition that clamours for a multiplication, a deluge, a superabundance, of mercy [*multiplica super nos misericordiam tuam*].

God's mercy is not a condescension or a momentary sweeping aside of austerity. It is the towering [*maxima*] disposition of a Father toward His children. It is fellow-feeling and gentleness. That which is severe is painted in upon, and finds its interpretation in, that which seemingly contradicts severity but which actually changes it from cruelty into beneficence.

God's meekness and gentleness and lowliness did not begin upon earth as new or as temporary attributes. They were simply manifested then by and in Jesus Christ under human con-

[1] Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

ditions. God is meek and gentle and lowly yesterday, to-day, and for ever in heaven and on earth. Love has stern qualities, as we shall come to consider later, but they are all, as I have just intimated, subsidiary to the gentle qualities. It is full of significance that the human form in St. John's apocalyptic portrait of God on His throne does not appear. In its stead is the Lamb, that is the essential, dominating feature of the person and teaching of our lowly Saviour, who was oppressed, yet He humbled Himself and opened not His mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea, He opened not His mouth.

It will astonish the reader of the Book of the Revelation, who has not studied the place of the Lamb in its mysterious chapters, to discover how constant and high a position this symbol holds. The praise of heaven and earth is directed to the Lamb that hath been slain; it is the Lamb that alone understands life; around the Lamb the redeemed gather as the saved about their Saviour; the wrath of heaven is the wrath of the Lamb; the holy city coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, is the bride, the wife of the Lamb; the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the

temple of heaven; the glory of God lightens the celestial city, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. It would be a natural question to ask why, instead of the Lamb, the Son of Man should not appear? The answer is that the Lamb is the Son of Man in His supreme character of meek, gentle, forgiving, sacrificial love wherein consists His leonine, His regal strength.

So the meekness and forbearance and lowliness of the God of the Old Testament repeat themselves in Jesus of Nazareth and still again proclaim their age-long sovereignty on the Throne of God and of the Lamb, as the seer leads us to the door open in heaven and bids us look through. It is not only the Lamb as though it had been slain upon which our gaze is fixed, not merely the Christ of Calvary, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the God whose eternal character is self-sacrificial, self-donative, in the form of the Cross.

III

The Book of the Revelation might be accurately described as being a study of life in terms of the whole. No element that belongs to life is missing, no force that strives and threatens to overthrow it is overlooked, no tie that binds

together the myriad parts of the unity of God's perfect plan is neglected. And all the while the self-giving character of Deity is forced on our attention by the Lamb. Though we recognize that we are moving in the realm of symbolism, it is startling to find as the conspicuous feature in the Godhead a lamb, a member of the brute creation, rather than a man, a member of the human family. The explanation, of course, is found in the ancient scheme of Jewish sacrifice. In the Old Testament the lamb is offered by the hands of others. That was the shadow of the reality. But the Lamb of God that beareth the sin of the world, when He was offered was both priest and victim.

I am jealous for the word sacrifice. Its Old Testament significance is ordinarily too prominent in Christian teaching. Pain and death are there, if not as chief, at any rate as conspicuous features. I am not saying that self-sacrifice always or usually dispenses with them. That is not so. But surely they hold a subsidiary, or, better still, a conquered place in self-donation as considered in the light of the sacrificial character of the life of God, whose bliss is supreme. They are the discords that are necessary to harmony. The Puritan conscience makes men suspicious of a duty whose chief characteristic

is its pleasantness or which is not actually distasteful. The thought is as dangerous as its converse, that we have already reached a stage where joy is its own security, and that everything we want to do, it is our duty to do because we like it. Self-giving must always give at least a twinge to undue self-love,[1] but viewed as the perpetual flow of God's life it is the consummation of joy. Our Lord incorporated pain and death into His self-giving because they blocked His path, but He would have had the cup pass from Him had it been morally and spiritually possible.

The mind of the self-giver is set on saving. It never gives merely for the sake of giving or without reference to a set purpose. Nothing is more demoralizing than to give carelessly and without a purpose supported by the pillars of principle. Herein consists the difference between waste and sacrifice. The one—I speak in the terms of Old Testament thought—is, as it were, the slaughter of a lamb because one chances to meet it; the other is the solemn offering of a sacrificial victim at the appointed hour in the Temple for the sins of the people. The former seeks mainly for that which is self-disciplinary; the latter for opportunity to serve others in the

[1] Self-love is wrong only so far as it is incomplete or exclusive or disproportionate. Self-love is not selfishness.

most effective way, be the pain great or the joy great. The one is self-conscious, the other is other-self-conscious.

Think of the wonderful heroic women of Belgium who "have not taken a day's rest since the beginning of the war. How should they, since every day thousands of hungry children wait at their gates to be not only fed but weighed, watched, medically examined." They are saving others, therefore themselves they cannot save. Their sacrifice is of the Christ sort. A great purpose looking toward a great end anticipates the joy of achievement so that the pain of effort, or the suffering involved in the process of achieving, is more or less smothered by the coming joy. The Lamb of God, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame.

To sum it all up—would it not be truer to bid people look for the joy in self-sacrifice rather than for the suffering? They are both there, and the former is the higher as well as the stronger. This I say with the picture of the trenches before my eyes. As Julian Trenfell's *Into Battle*, written by him after he was a seasoned soldier, with death in full view, makes clear, there is a passionate joy in the white souls of the unsmirched manhood that daily goes "over the top," in both senses, which neither the ripping shrapnel

can rend nor the poisonous shroud of gas can smother. If the superior joy is not always coincident with the inferior suffering, it is the latter's prelude and cadence.

Space will allow me to do no more than touch upon the one further feature of the Lamb with which I shall deal—His wrath. In the light of the Old Testament teaching and the unchangeable character of God as written across the face of human experience, the wrath of the lamb contains in it the scourging, punitive element from which there can be no escape. Patience, meekness and self-giving do not forfeit for their possessor the right or the power to become terrible in denuncication and condemnation here or hereafter. The wrath of outraged righteousness may be restricted to a last resort and confined within narrow channels, but because of the fact it is all the more terrible when its clean white flame leaps forth. The punishment of Cain and the cleansing of the Temple were performed by the same Being. The same mind framed the penalties attendant upon sin, whether in the Mosaic code or in the woes of the New Testament.

But I think there may be another interpretation of the wrath of the Lamb. I dimly conceive of it as being a fury of forbearance, to use

a paradox as legitimate as the one which it aims to elucidate. The emphasis is thrown on the last rather than the first member of the phrase. After all it is the fixed character of the agent which determines the quality of his temper, and not *vice versa*. Was it not the wrath of the Lamb that looked upon Peter so that he went out and wept bitterly? Was it not the same wrath that later said: Feed My lambs: tend My sheep, so that the rebuke of his sin struck into the quick of the penitent disciple's soul as it would never have done had austerity been substituted for understanding gentleness?

I can understand God showing such a superabundance of considerateness and tenderness and mercy as to make the soul cry aloud for the thunder of rebuke. In more ways than one God is a consuming fire, for in Him is the wrath of the Lamb. The thought of the terrors of the Lord terrify me and make me want to flee away; the thought of God's patience and sympathy brings me to my knees and to Him. If the end of wrath is redemption, then I can understand how the punitive and purgative effect of the wrath of the Lamb exceeds any other wrath, and how there is wrath in its seeming opposite.

I doubt not that among the major surprises awaiting us on our arrival in the world beyond

this, will be the melting rather than the crushing power of the wrath of the Lamb. It will scorch and scald as all the woes pronounced by almightiness never could. And it will draw us to Him purified and healed. Whatever that wrath will be, it already is.

HYMN OF REDEMPTION

Worthy art Thou to take the roll,
And to open the seals thereof,
For Thou wast slain,
And didst buy to God in Thy blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And didst make them a kingdom and priests,
And they reign upon the earth.

Angels' Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb
That hath been slain,
To receive the power,
And riches and wisdom and might,
And glory and honour and blessing.

All Creation's Chorus

To Him that sitteth upon the throne,
And to the Lamb,
Be the blessing and the honour,
And the glory and the might,
To the ages of the ages.

IV

GOD'S AUSTERITIES

GOD'S austerities are as inflexible and immutable as His patience and meekness and forbearance. If the Old Testament is presented too frequently as portraying a cruel God, the New Testament is too often presented as portraying an effeminized God whose gentleness is mere amiability and whose meekness is nothing but weakness. The Fatherhood of God during the past half-century has tended toward becoming a reflection in theology of the self-indulgent, easy-going temper of our age. The effect of this on morals has been and still is disastrous. We must have a God who hates as passionately as the God of the Old Testament hates—who hates evil with consuming force wherever it is and in whomsoever. Such a God we have. Just as all the gentleness of Jesus Christ and His revelation are to be found at the base of God's character as manifested in Old Testament times, so all the fine austerity and severity of Javeh reappear in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Though the Lamb of the Revelation stands fixed in the centre of Godhead, anger and punishment and violent force rise and swell through the universe in its march toward the goal of God's placing. There is even war in Heaven.

I

It is of the utmost importance to hold that the revelation of love in Jesus Christ is the amplification and completion, not the nullification, of all the revelation that has preceded. It is the stability of God that is the source of our confidence in Him. Whim and caprice find no foothold in Him, or in that which emanates from Him. With Him there can be no variation, and whatever shadows there may be, they are not shadows cast by turning.

Carry this thought up to date and we find ourselves secure in the character of God as given to us by the Church of the ages and the Holy Scriptures, which constitute its basic literature. There must be a fixed theology, if there be a God with a fixed character. There must be a progressive theology if there is spiritual growth in the souls of men. But in theology as in the Subject of theology there can be no contradiction and no shadow cast by turning. The sole change pos-

sible and necessary is one not of destruction but of fulfilment. I came, said Christ, not to destroy, but to fulfil. Heresy is incomplete thinking. Schism is incomplete conduct.

The almightiness, the justice and the austerity of the God of power as made known in the Old Testament are not minimized or superseded by the revelation of the God of love as made known in Jesus Christ. They are interpreted and transfigured. Our eyes are purified so that we can see more clearly, and we are emancipated from the cult of the incomplete into catholicity of intention and belief. What we shall come to know of God's character in the future does not indicate some hitherto undeveloped element in Him; it is simply developed sight on our part which enables us to see what formerly we were blind to.

> I could see
> The revelation that is always there,
> But somehow is not always clear to me.

God is almighty in the sense of being the author and absolute controller of all might.

> O God, creation's secret force,
> Thyself unmoved, all motion's source.

So runs the ancient hymn. God does not make futile experiments. The issue of His works is as sure as their beginning. His almightiness

includes in it physical force as operative in nature. It would appear to me as though a dangerous and spurious distinction were frequently made between what God does and what He permits. Except where the human will enters in to thwart God's operations on earth, God is the ultimate agent of that which happens. The thunder of the avalanche and its consequences, and the flash of the lightning and its destination, are not the activity of irresponsible nature but of nature's Almighty Creator and Sustainer. Physical force is not necessarily brute force. It may be, and is, Divine force so far as it has in it the ethical and ultimate purpose of God. It is because we see only in part, because we think and live incompletely, that we incline to conclude otherwise. We forget that time is a little figment of the sun soon, at longest, to be blotted out. If physical force, including that process of disintegration called death, forms part of a process productive of more abundant life, it is not contrary to love. It is unkind to the lower in order to be kind to the higher. In a scheme that looks beyond time it has an important function. May it not be that we are laying too much stress on the value of physical life? It is much stronger to think of God as King of the universe which He made, and using

the inexplicable physical forces which have always been operating, now violently, now kindly, than to credit them to the control of evil agents, who are using them successfully against God and His plan.

So far as justice and the infliction of punishment is concerned, there is nothing in the Old Testament quite comparable with what is found in the Sermon on the Mount. God is revealed as an exacting God:—Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Thy name, and by Thy name cast out devils, and by Thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity. —Such a passage is by no means isolated.— Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him.—Every one who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whoseoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I came

to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace but a sword.

But enough of quotation. The teaching of our Lord is full of similar passages, whose austerities more than match those of the Old Testament. As for hell, the New Testament portrayal of it is far more awful than is to be found elsewhere. A modern writer, in view of current events, refers to "the stern necessity of the once discredited, but now grateful doctrine of hell."

II

The awful passages of the New Testament, especially those dark, mysterious ones which were uttered by our Lord's own lips, would be paralyzing but for the fact of the Incarnation. A God who made Himself known as we have come to know Him in history and personal experience, even though He proclaimed Himself merciful and gentle, would repel rather than attract unless there were some assurance more than mere words that He was not arbitrary or cruel in His seeming severities. Such assurance we have in the Incarnation. In Jesus Christ God reveals Himself as being under His own disciplines, penalties and austerities. It would be incomplete to say that He first became so

when Jesus Christ entered into the world. God did indeed then stoop that man might rise. But in another sense He revealed in incontrovertible terms the eternal truth that God in creating man laid upon him no necessity except that which was inherent in the Divine life as such, and not merely in the Divine character as Creator. The Incarnation lays it all open as in a scroll unrolled.

Was there anything which man is subjected to that Jesus Christ did not voluntarily and deliberately subject Himself to? He plumbed the depths and scaled the heights. Being formed in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Though as sinless as God, He bowed Himself to the worst penalties of wrongdoing —He became sin for us. He was recognized by His forerunner as the sin-bearer. Entering into a society of sinful men, He felt the bitterness and wickedness of the sins of others as none but a sinless one is capable of doing. The physical force which desecrated His sacred body was worse than the ruthlessness of the avalanche or the swift stroke of the lightning. It was the unclean battering of brute force put into execution by the hands of those who were made in His image.

God has so ordered His revelation that He does not depend upon the championship of human argument to vindicate His character. He Himself is best able to make clear to mankind what He is and what His estimate of the value of human life is. By the spectacle of Himself living victoriously as man not merely under the normal disciplines and austerities which inhere in Him as God, but also under the abnormal conditions bred and inflicted by human self-will, His love is vindicated, and declared in new and triumphant tones which come echoing down the ages.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen.

III

Fortified by the Incarnation we are in a position to look life, as we of to-day know it, squarely in the face with both hope and expectancy, hope which never allows life to be without a

future and expectancy that forms the highway for the feet of the always coming Son of God. The age is brimming with pain, self-inflicted by society upon itself, in addition to the inscrutable dark mysteries which originate and operate quite independently of what men may think or do. The crown of almightiness is its kingliness. God has proved in Jesus Christ that not only have hostile forces no victorious power over Himself or anything that is His, but also that eventually they prove to be tributary to His purposes. When human self-will clothes itself in the forces of nature and is manifested as "science without a soul," such triumph as is achieved is momentary and in reality an element in its own ultimate defeat. Long ages ago this was the interpretation of God's almightiness by a poet—

> Why do the nations rage,
> And the peoples imagine a vain thing?
> The kings of the earth set themselves,
> And the rulers take counsel together
> Against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying,
> Let us break their bands asunder,
> And cast away their cords from us.
> He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh;
> The Lord shall have them in derision,
> Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,
> And vex them in His sore displeasure:
> Yet I have set my king
> Upon my holy hill of Zion.

We have neither reason nor right to allow ourselves to suppose that God's plans can suffer ultimate defeat. It is a species of doubt to which the Incarnation, the greatest fact in history, gives flat and emphatic denial. Delay is nothing but a salutory discipline for us men of the moment. Reverses stimulate courage and give occasion to furbish ideals and simplify motives. Bondage, the defeat of a generation, treachery within, do not mean victory, for the enemy where God's cause is concerned. God's plans are indestructible, and His purpose cannot be deflected, for He is Almighty and is the Master of all force. He is well experienced in wars, and knows how to distil the red flood of tragedy into a perpetual deed of benediction.

At a grave crisis in the slow working out of personal freedom in America for herself and for the world, James Russell Lowell wrote in terms peculiarly suited to the crisis of to-day—

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

Again in another passage the poet sings—

Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet
'Tis Truth alone is strong,
And, albeit she wander outcast now,
I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to
Enshield her from all wrong.

We have been thinking of the mighty sweep of world movements. But a man cannot be brave for others unless he is first brave in himself; he cannot be hopeful for others unless he is first hopeful for himself; in the high altitudes of moral and spiritual realities you cannot give to others except so far as you are winning or have won them for yourself. There is not one of us who, either as a part of, or apart from, the tempest of destruction that is raging, is not obliged daily to face some phase of the antagonisms, contradictions and austere forces which originate either in the perversity of men or in unsolved mystery. Our outlook for the world is coloured by our mind on that which is personal.

The Incarnation teaches us not only the art of fearlessness but also the science of super-victory—the phrase is St. Paul's, not mine. Who shall separate us from the love, the operative, ceaseless self-giving, of Christ? In answer the Apostle proceeds to enumerate such things as are due to or aggravated by the will of man, concluding with one of the most trenchant, thrilling sen-

tences in all literature:—In all these things we are more than conquerors, we are super-victors, through Him that loved us. As for the great forces that emanate from and, with all their elements, are controlled by God, he says in fine climax:—I am persuaded that neither they nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In short, God reigns. The thought is vast and adequate, be unsolved mysteries of His being and operation what they may.

It is easy to praise Thee, O God, for the joys that flow from Thee and for Thy beauty. But in the mystery of Thy control of life are dark places which cloud my soul. Thine austerities loom large and threatening. How can I find music in my soul for these? Whatever it may be, it must be the music of faith. The mystery is too deep for me to plumb. But Thou dost not allow evil to reign. Thine is the victory, the super-victory. The very wrath of man can be turned to Thy praise. Darkness and sorrow and pain may call forth a minor note, but even a sobbing song can praise Thee. Therefore, O Lord, I praise Thee in storm and tempest. Praised be God our Father in whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning!

V

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In moving from a consideration of God to a consideration of man, the transition is easy. We pass from God to God's image. No introduction of human life into the pages of immortal literature could excel the single sentence which sets man in the world, second only to God Himself—God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him. In the truth of this statement consists our only, though our sufficient, hope for the race. Human nature is insured of a worthy destiny. It can never become the caprice or puppet of a mere creator. Man is, in his main character, the beloved child of a loving Father whose likeness is stamped upon his inmost self-hood.

I

Wherein does man's likeness to God consist? In capacity for self-giving—I use this term rather

than love because it accentuates the power and effort of choice, which is the keynote of liberty. Whatever human life becomes, it becomes by cumulative decision, not by chance. Power of choice is the heritage of our manhood; its neglect or destruction is the abdication of human personality.

It is not with the will alone but with the total self that high choice is made. This includes our affections and intelligence as well as the categorical imperative of our being. The will alone, it is true, can force us and hold us to duty with the balance of our nature in violent revolt, and there is something sternly splendid in the process, but it is stoical rather than Christian. There are occasions when the will as helmsman and the conscience as captain must keep the ship steady to her course with the whole creed of inner faculties and outer senses in mutinous mood. But the triumph of choice is achieved when the personality decides as a unified whole. This can come about only by living life steadily and living it whole. Preference frequently must be put to school to conscience, and the lower is always a laggard pupil of the higher.

The highest choice that self can make is to give self to the Self-giver. This is living religion. Just as God's first gift to man was

Himself in the endowment of the Divine image, so the first gift of man to God must be in kind. Anything less than self is a denial of organic relationship. Let us once admit that God has made common lot with us, and it follows that making God our first and fullest choice should be spontaneous. Our co-likeness with God insures our success in finding Him. If we are discouraged in our religious experience, let us linger awhile over the thought of our being built in the image of God and we shall soon find ourselves moving towards Him with the naturalness of children to their Father.

We must emphasize the firstness of our choice of God as the receptacle into which to pour self. We, the first-born of His creatures, must give Him in intensity and in order the firstness and then the fulness of our choice. Von Hügel, in his curious forcible language, drives home the thought when he says: "Religion is essentially Social *vertically*—indeed, here is its deepest root. It is unchangeably a faith in God, a love of God, an intercourse with God." There is something splendidly suggestive in the thought of the soul's "vertical" choice. It chooses ambitiously the highest heights, surmounting clouds, adventuring sunwards and beyond. The soul leaves side issues and dilettantism far in the rear as it

rises vertically, a "convinced follower of the straight line."

There is something of the mystics' thought that God "needs us," in a writer whom we would harldy suspect of mysticism, William James, the great exponent of pragmatism:—

"I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it *feels* like a real fight,—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to redeem; and first of all to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears. For such a half-wild, half-saved universe our nature is adapted. The deepest thing in our nature is this dumb region of the heart in which we dwell alone with our willingnesses and our unwillingnesses, our faiths and our fears."

I have gone on quoting beyond that which is apposite because of the discerning beauty and power of the entire passage.

We best learn that we are made in the image of God by, so to speak, matching our likeness with His in the mirror of Jesus Christ. No one can seriously and thoroughly survey the reasoned as well as the instinctive sacrificial history of the race without seeing in it the likeness to the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world to the Christ of Calvary. The groundwork of the universe and of man, its crown and climax, is patterned after the groundwork of the character of God, and more and more it reveals itself to be in the form of the Cross.

In the reckless, and yet calculated, self-giving of to-day for the benefit of to-morrow, out of sheer loyalty to dominating ideals of righteousness, justice and liberty, self-sacrifice has reached a summit hitherto unscaled. The horrors of the Great War are compensated for by the wealth of self-giving found behind its scarlet veil.

What heart does not quicken to the tramping of that massed human courage, which to quote an American lad who fought with the British forces before his own country came in, one moment is clothed in the superb glory of young manhood and the next is nothing but a few fluttering

rags on a tangle of barbed wire? Who is so tame as not to be thrilled by the self-abandonment of the youth who sends home this message as, under no compulsion save his own glorious choice, he strides away to take his place by the big guns:—"I hate war and loathe everything military, but I see the issue at stake and must go. I am not afraid to die, except that it will give pain to mother." What is there on record more enduring and vital than the sacrificial victory of the Belgian defiance of "science without a soul" and, its sister, the Gallipoli adventure in which, as Masefield insists, men aimed at, and almost achieved, not merely the impossible but also the unimaginable?

Let us thank God that He "has matched us with this hour." Our day and generation is full of men conformed to the likeness of God and worthy to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Religion may be halting and crude in its form, but it is powerful in its substance.

II

Self-giving, to borrow further from von Hügel, is *horizontal* as well as *vertical*. Of course it must be so. We cannot choose God without choosing what God chooses. If we recognize

God as Father we do so solely on the basis of being made in His image. Involved in our choice of Him is the choice of all the rest of the family constructed after the same pattern. The inspiration of the thought that the human race is our heritage and the measure of our capacity for fellowship, is second only to the thought that we are made in the image of God and that He is ours as well as we His. The horizontal choice strikes across the vertical and makes the sign of the Cross, or self-giving, over our human relationships. With and for the rest of humanity we must work out our sacrificial or self-donative career.

Even if but two men sincerely and fully were to choose vertically and horizontally there would be of necessity group self-giving or a Catholic Church—a Church whose life found expression in the terms of the whole. Such a Church there is, vast beyond knowledge, hidden rather than manifest. It comprises a family, each member of which knows the Father, and is known of Him, though each with his own intimate secrets and each with his own personal knowledge and experience. By mutual interchange of all their treasures each is enriched by and enriches the rest. The giving of self does not mean the suppression of self; on the contrary, it means

the realization of self. All that every one knows of God is, so far as it goes, good. It is incomplete in itself. It needs amplification and relationship to the whole. Whatever pruning it may require it is never abrogated or nullified by any subsequent manifestation or discovery.

God never makes mistakes in His self-showing. Man never makes hopeless mistakes in his discovery of God except so far as he tries to make his own experience or conception of God the whole of revelation without regard for what God has revealed of Himself to others. Sectarianism, in spirit and in form, is *par excellence* the cult of the incomplete. It is a refusal to consider truth and life in terms of the whole, not merely the whole of now but the whole of yesterday. It pins its trust to the dicta of a group or the findings of a fixed period. It is content to worship and to defend a conception of God instead of God. It lacks the shape of the Cross which rises vertically as high as God, and stretches right and left to the outermost bounds of humanity. In its extremist form it not only refuses to recognize as acceptable to Christ any group-culture save its own, but it also questions others' right to continue to be. It is precisely this spirit, not in one special Church but in many, which has disrupted Christendom.

Unity, visible and invisible, is not an accident of the Gospel. It is the Gospel. There is one body, and one Spirit even as also ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Upon honest recognition of this depends our knowledge of God and our understanding of man in all their richness and power. We need not wait for the outward manifestation of catholicity before thinking and praying and loving in terms of the whole. We can direct our choice toward catholicity now.

We can begin by refraining from condemning doctrines with which we are not familiar, and which we know solely from the standpoint of controversial prejudice. If we are moved to a study of phrases of thought or usage foreign to our experience, let our study of the subject be in the best constructive expression of its own exponents. We must bear in mind that Truth is that which men live by. When individuals or group-Christians, commonly called churches, though I shrink from applying so sacred and complete a term even to the largest fragment of Christendom—when they are found, generation after generation, adhering to a given doctrine, it is fair to assume that a vital truth is imbedded in that doctrine.

To take a single illustration: The major portion of

the Church has from an early moment practised the Invocation of Saints. A little examination might reveal to those to whom it is an unaccustomed doctrine, that its chief offence is in their idea of it or in its abuse. It stands for the permanent interrelationship of life on earth and beyond. It has its scientific counterpart in psychical research. At its root is the superb conception of the unloneliness of God—so that in approaching God you approach the crowded self-giving life of all heaven. Look through your Bible and see how God hates separateness or loneliness. From Genesis to Revelation He gathers close to Him His beloved in men and angels and living creatures. The figure of a lamb is part of His symbolic life. The Invocation of Saints makes direct appeal to those who stand nearest to Him and share His life of self-giving. I write as one who prefers to reach the saints on high through God, but I refuse to condemn those who prefer to reach God through the saints. Provided it is not the chief or only way of approach to Him, it is quite Christian. The matter is only one of formal usage. Underneath lies the splendour of the unloneliness of God and the Communion of Saints.

Let this one illustration suffice.

III

The churches will become the Church when there is in them all mutual horizontal as well as unified vertical self-giving. We have this to encourage us that there is an increasing disposition in this direction, a growing readiness to think in terms of the whole and a deliberate group-choosing of a life larger than that of its own prescribed boundaries. A self-centred church is self-destructive. Aloofness is something worse than schism. It is the root and origin of schism, deliberate segregation and isolation of the jewel from its setting, the part from its whole. Like the individuals who compose it, a church must be signed with the sign of the Cross, as well as be able to sign others with it. Its efficacy of signature is bound up with its completeness of surrender. All life comes in to being and is sustained by the One Spirit in His perpetual flow of self-giving. So far as a church fails to be a self-giving body it belies its origin and its character as a Spirit-bearing body, for it is the character of the Spirit to give without measure, deeply and inwardly as well as extensively.

Salvation consists in being lost in the universal. No individual or group experience becomes a permanent contribution to the world or reveals

a dependable principle upon which to construct future experiences, until it has submitted to and stood the test of the universal. Churches must be ready to die before they are worthy to live. We hug our tenets because they are ours, and we reject the tenets of others because they are theirs. We look at the brand on this or that embodiment of truth rather than at the embodiment, and judgment is pronounced on appearances instead of merits.

The same Spirit that is searching out the heart of nations to-day is searching out the heart of national churches and revealing to them their provincialism. The time has come when we can no longer rest satisfied to express Catholic truth and order in terms of national religion, the greater in the terms of the lesser; we must begin to express national religion in terms of catholicity, the part in terms of the whole.

Praised be God for the image of Himself with which He has indelibly stamped me. Thou hast endowed me with power of choice. It is Thy power, and without Thee it is a menace to myself and my fellows. In its right direction is freedom. By choice we fall: by choice we rise. No choice is free unless it be guided by Thee. No choice is wise except it be inspired by Thy wisdom. I praise Thee, O God, for all the right choices that I have made. I praise Thee for that I can reverse all the wrong choices of the past by a new and right choice. Lord, I would praise Thee by choosing right, by choosing Thee instead of me, by choosing Thy way and not mine, by choosing shame and pain, if need be, rather than honour and ease. Save me from the sectariansim of self into the catholicity of Thee.

VI

MAN IN MANKIND

We are responsible to two primary loyalties in the terms of which all lesser loyalties must be expressed, loyalty to God or the vertical loyalty, and loyalty to mankind or the horizontal loyalty. Our potential greatness is announced in our being built God-high and man-wide.

The vastness which these loyalties connote is so far from being oppressive as to be inviting. Human life at its earliest conscious moments claims completeness rather than detail. The child's questions are so profound as to puzzle the wise. Only a youth would venture to choose as the topic of an early theme the "World and its Contents." Even Freudian psychology preaches in somewhat pompous though indefinite language the capacity of human life for catholicity:—"There is at any moment of life some course of action (behaviour) which enlists all the capacities of the organism: This is phrased voluntaristically as 'some interest or aim to which a man devotes all his powers,' to which

his whole being is consecrated. . . . The more integrated behaviour is harmonious and consistent behaviour toward a larger and more comprehensive situation, toward a bigger section of the universe: it is lucidity and breadth of purpose." Only that which challenges can inspire human nature. It is the limitless, the unexplored, the unknown that draw out our best effort and reveal our capacity.

A normal man finds only elbow-room in the world of men. Human society is not too big for him. It is just large enough. Theoretically it has long been held that the limits of human fellowship and service were the human race. It has been reserved for our day to see myriads of men freely giving self and treasure in behalf, not of local or personal interests and purposes, but for the sake of humanity and the fundamental principles which make human society stable. Rising out of the welter of battle, there is an enlarged conception of man's responsibilities to mankind which seemingly needed a cataclysm for its unveiling. Its splendour tinges the heavy war-cloud with glory. Please God, never again will we sink back into the smallness of mere petty nationalism or other sectional life. To do so would be to abandon God's master plan for us, and to shrivel into the mean stature of pigmies.

I

With most of us, at any rate, the nation in our early days and even later stood for a finality. Whether or not we expressed it in the language of Stephen Decatur, our loyalty was to the nation, right or wrong. Other nations were judged by their nearness to or farness from our own ideals and customs. Our own nation was the norm by which all others were tested. Its superiority was so patent that it was a matter of honest surprise to us when the citizens of other countries failed to recognize it. As for the oriental world, it was valuable so far as it contributed of its wealth and curios to our own gratification. Its inhabitants enjoyed only a modified humanity, worthy of missionary endeavour, it is true, but missionary endeavour as an outlet for our generosity of soul rather than as an honest recognition that God has made of one all nations of men to dwell on the face of the whole earth. I am recalling my own state of mind in youth and not appealing to imagination. I know that most of the people I knew viewed things in the same manner. Such a frame of mind in child or man is mischievous, untrue and unnecessary. It is mere bald pa-

triotism devoid of the checks and balances of a catholic outlook, that is to say, it is arrogance, conceit, and a denial of brotherhood, made under the shelter of and in the name of the nation.

Such a spirit, nurtured unto a passionate conviction throughout its citizenship, was bound to do that which it has done—precipitate Armageddon. The set purpose of one nation to impose its culture and supremacy on all others has startled us into the recognition that mere patriotism not only breeds strife, tyranny and barbarity, but also tends to denude men of that freedom of choice which in the sphere of government as elsewhere is their inherent right as beings made in the image of God.

The nation becomes much more splendid when viewed, not as an end in itself, but in its true character of group-personality, organically and responsibly related to all similar group-personalities, unable to fully realize its possibilities except in sympathetic and intelligent relationship with the rest. The nation is a permanent social unit in mankind. It can best develop its powers by making as its chief aim universal service. This is not a new conceit or an idea of my own. The prophet Lowell put it in immortal form before the middle of the last century was born:—

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim.

The nation can no more escape the sign of the Cross than anything else Divine or human can. Belgium and France in their sacrificial life of the past three and a half years have taught us the lesson in a way that can never be forgotten. That which has proved a necessity in time of war bids fair to become a preferred and chosen element of conduct in time of peace.

Patriotism, then, is loyalty to the nation, the nation as a social unit, the nation as responsible to, and expressed in the terms of, mankind. The word is magnificent by tradition. It is not to be discredited much less abandoned, but to be given new magnificence by an expanded conception of its scope and meaning.

II

Patriotism's function is to make itself felt and heard chiefly in the language of service or self-giving. It recognizes the nation as the vehicle by means of which a citizen can reach, and

contribute to, the commonwealth of mankind. Its loyalty is impassioned—loyalty to the nation not solely as it was or is but, in addition, as it is becoming.

In its full meaning the nation shares in that eternal character which is the heritage of everything human. It certainly does not consist only in the sum total of the citizenship, their thoughts and activities, of any given moment or generation. It comes to us, striding down the centuries, endowed with the glory of all its past triumphs, proudly bearing in its bosom the royal contribution of the lives and characters of its heroes, saints and patriots. Its form and incidental features may and do change, but its distinctive soul and character abide. We hold the nation of our day in trust. We are its stewards not less than its beneficiaries. We are to see that its immortal traditions receive no harm or blot because of us.

But while the nation comes to us with all the completeness of the past, it also comes with all the incompleteness of the past. We must refuse to allow it to be static. Our contribution to its progress must be more than imitative; it must be original under the inspiring force of the Spirit of God, who gives to men without stint or measure. At the risk of the literary

fault of over-quoting, again I turn to Lowell to say what cannot be said in prose:—

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient food uncouth;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast with Truth.

In the dawning nation each citizen is charged with a stewardship not less than clothed with a privilege. He is responsible up to the measure of his developed gifts and capacity for the normal growth of his country's life. Of him that hath much, much will be expected. Unless democracy means this, it is a dangerous principle.

In the working out of the Chinese ideograph for country there is an interesting bit of democratic history. The first symbol represented within the four sides of a boundary, the earth, the mouths of the people and a spear. An imperial tyrant for a short time displaced the symbol of the people and put that representing emperor instead. The other day when the Republic was proclaimed, the ideograph adopted was that for the people with the prolongation of an upward stroke which makes it read "the people who have lifted up their heads."

From the conception of an eating, fighting people we rise to something approximating men made in the image of God, moral, self-determining. The

character of the nation is in the hands of the citizen, who is primarily not a member of a local community or of a section of the nation but of the whole. Just as nationalism must find expression in terms of the universal, so local loyalties must utter themselves in terms of the State. In its last analysis democracy is based upon a frank recognition that man was made in the image of God and that he (or she) possesses the inherent right and responsibility of exercising free choice in all that pertains to his or her life as a citizen, with due respect, of course, to the instruments and occasions provided by the will of the majority in any given State.

The requirement which the nation lays upon the citizen is that he should do his share in universal service. The term is so great that we are only just beginning to understand its complete significance. It has come into prominence during war times, but it is not exclusively a war term. It is of the essence of government by the people. That which is necessary in a moment of peril as a defensive measure is equally necessary in times of peace as a constructive principle. It remains for the several nations, each in its own way, to give worthy and effective embodiment to it. The unchartered freedom of

democracy's past has not only been a weariness but also a menace to the well-being of more nations than one. Universal service, when expressed in legislative form, is no more to be singled out for opprobrium than any other law which is the will of the people. It is compulsory only in the sense of self-compulsory wherever there is government by the people. Law in its highest sense is a formal embodiment of a people's ideals. Obedience to law is voluntary rather than compulsory for the people who originally willed the law into being. Minorities have rights, of course, but they are constitutional rights restricted by the principles which animate organic life.

III

Such a consideration, which keeps the whole of mankind in full view without losing sight of the individual man, enhances enormously the value of each personal unit in the social whole. The citizen is of value to the nation, and beyond, in proportion to his contents. Hence it is at once incumbent upon the State to give every citizen full opportunity to rise to his best, and upon every citizen to wring from opportunity everything that will make for his growth in all departments of his manhood. In the nation,

broadly viewed, there is exactly the measure and kind of inspiration needed to set working that high spirit of self-respect which is a chief factor in the life of self-giving. Conrad expresses the thought finely in a sentence: "I have a positive horror of losing even for one moving moment that complete possession of myself which is the first condition of good service."

The seeming smallness of the individual life is an illusion hard to dissipate. Obscurity, confinement in circumscribed or dull conditions, mediocre endowments, are obstacles hard to combat. Nothing but stubborn idealism can make a lasting impression on them. And we must be reconciled to the burden of weak, incompetent, perverted elements which society always has to carry. But the wreckage among men does not minimize the responsibility of those of us who have not suffered disablement. On the contrary it enhances our duty. It is a complaint against democracy that it is the "cult of the incompetent," that it is capable of producing only an average of a lowest common denominator sort. For a double reason the charge is unfair—because as yet democracy has little more than a chapter or so of crude experiments to its credit, and because it has given its main attention to protecting the liberty of the citizen rather

than to the development of his responsibilities. The plea that the liberty of the subject cannot be interfered with has been, and is yet being used by many as a bulwark of selfishness and so a stumbling-block in the growth of the commonwealth. So far as the average is concerned it may not be as high as it should be, but it is appreciably higher in intelligence and character than it could be under other conditions. There is, however, no standard on which to base a comparison, for the modern nation in its constituent life and conditions is a thing apart. Most men of enlightenment are sufficiently confident of the central principle of democracy to be glad to commend themselves and their fortunes to its keeping, and to give their lives and treasure ungrudgingly that "democracy may be made safe for the world."

This is sure, that in a democracy the man who does rise to a conspicuous position of power and leadership can, if he so wills, always reach his goal on his substantial merits and with clean hands. If he does not do so, he is guilty of abusing liberty and choosing the lower when the higher was available. The development of outstanding character is as necessary as ever and for the same purpose now as in the past. As the war has shown, democracy is not afraid

of one-man power. Indeed, it is her glory that she can use it with a security unknown to other systems of government. In a democracy there are moments and circumstances when much must be committed to the control of a single man. He is selected by the people. He is what he is because the nation has given him the opportunity and provided the facilities by which he made himself. Now he is called upon to become a public servant with large powers, limited and controlled by the laws of the State and always responsibile to the people in whose behalf he is administering a trust. Not only is one-man power not undemocratic, but also an instrument of government that is safe, and in the same degree powerful, nowhere else but in a democracy.

It is told of Lord Roberts that, years back, he had an inborn conviction that he was some day going to be called upon by his nation for an important service. This led him through two decades, silently and unremittingly, to prepare himself for the contingency should it arise. He resolved that if, or when, the call to give himself came he would be ready to give something worth while. We know that he did not fail in his purpose, and because of his foresight and preparedness, he was equipped to accept his suc-

cessive opportunities as a king mounting a throne.

His case is a parable of the relation of the nation to the citizen and of the citizen to the nation. The larger and wider our sense of responsibility within the extreme limits of our capacity, the better it is for both man and mankind. Without it the processes of growth go in halting fashion at best. With the knowledge not only that a man cannot save himself except by losing himself in the services of the public weal, but also that the commonwealth of mankind is in his keeping, the citizen rests in the assurance that his is no mean destiny. The relationship is reciprocal. The citizen must duly exalt the State and serve it with loyalty: the State must nurture the citizen and not have it laid to its charge that through its deficiencies or provincialism there has been lack of fostering care or inspiring claims. The citizen as a soldier suddenly leaps into unwonted splendour. But, after all, the soldier is only the citizen in the garb of self-sacrificing service. The garb may change, the character never.

"For their sakes I sanctify myself" has a new and thrilling meaning in the light of the narrowed and intimate world which current events have suddenly revealed to us. Every one has a mission of influence to the whole of man-

kind. It is not necessary that there should be conspicuous position for the exercise of it. It manages itself, and is so certain of its path, that it never loses its way. The curious thing is that usually, if not always, a self-conscious attempt to direct or control or place on high our good works impedes the operation. Secrecy is a potent factor in all life processes, and the steady rise to superior character is the most hidden of all operations.

The future development of democracy is at this juncture only just hinted at, but it is safe to say that it aspires to control the fortunes of mankind. It cannot rest in circumscribed areas. It is a force working for social coherence, and for a vast unity without devitalizing lesser permanent group-unities such as the nation. Just as in an emergency it has created an intimacy between nations of a deeper and richer tone than the term "alliance" denotes, so in normal conditions it is capable of so cementing the component parts of the human race together, as to enable mankind, as such, to deal effectively with those colossal problems which are inherently the problems of mankind. We have already made a successful beginning in this direction.

We must not allow self-preference, not to say self-righteousness, to blind us to the measure of

truth in the following poem to Germany, written by the young British poet and patriot who died for his country at the age of twenty—

> You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
> And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
> But gropers both through fields of thought confined
> We stumble and we do not understand.
> You only saw your future bigly planned,
> And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
> And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
> And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.
>
> When it is peace, then we may view again
> With new-won eyes each other's truer form
> And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
> We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
> When it is peace. But until peace, the storm,
> The darkness and the thunder and the rain.

Lord, I praise Thee for the spaciousness of life, its firm foundations and its limitless reaches. Thou hast put my feet in a large room and cast my lot in a fair ground. Yea, I have a goodly heritage. I praise Thee for the vast family of mankind which winds down the ages, gathering into its completeness the successive generations of men. In the shaping of the nations I see Thy creative, superintending hand. Thou art the Father of them all, and it is of Thy purpose that they should all flow into a unity of mutual understanding, forbearance and sympathy. Lord, I would endeavour to further Thy plan by preserving the unity of spirit in the bond of peace in the home, the community, and that part of the society of man in which I have responsibility.

VII

THE WHOLENESS OF HOLINESS

It would be good for the English-speaking world if we were to dispense for a while with the use of the word holiness, because it has been smirched like the word church with sectarian meaning. It may seem too much like a pun to claim that it is the most complete word in the language. But it is a sober fact. Holy and whole, holiness, and wholeness are synonymous; and health is but another way of writing holth or wholth, holiness or wholeness. We have confused piety or virtue or a combination of both with holiness. Piety and virtue and a lot of other qualities are component parts of holiness, but in themselves they are no more holiness than the sun's ray is the sun.

Holiness is the normal condition of a whole man as God designed him. The wholeness of God is His holiness or vice versa, as you choose. We can say with perfect reverence that God's state is one of eternal health. It is at moments when the doors of heaven are widest open that

God appears as the Holy or Whole One. Of course it must be so. Full views shew us the whole. It was when Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple, that the completest song that can be sung moved the foundations of the threshold and came soaring down the ages—Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts. Of course such a God is immanent, of course the whole earth is full of His glory or excellence, for of Him are all things and in Him all things consist. Again, it was when John the Seer was led to a door opened in heaven and bidden to come up hither, that he saw a throne set in heaven and one sitting upon the throne—it was then that the one complete song was heard also by him. There was no improvement on what Isaiah heard; that could not be. The thrice holy is the superlative or eternal degree of holy—Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come.

Another implication of the English word holiness is that it cannot be in the nature of things aught but social manward as well as Godward. Personal holiness is bound up with group-holiness. No one can claim it for himself without claiming it for all those organically related to him at the same time. There must be leaders in holiness,

but there are also the beneficiaries of those whom they lead. If I refrain from expanding this important point it is because it is implied in all I say.

I

Holiness, then, is wholeness as applied to God and those made in His image. It is in God's wholeness that our wholeness consists. He is all in all. What a rebuke this is to small or sectarian views of God and His purposes! His completeness is available to us, is our inspiration, is our heritage. God is so careful to preserve for us our vastness that He never invites us to clip off corners of Himself to tuck away in our little selves.

It is for righteousness that we are expected to hunger and thirst, and it is with righteousness that we shall be filled. At the dawn of wonders, in the dim ages of the past, He said, Be ye whole (holy) for the Lord your God is whole (holy). And when the Light that lighteth every man coming into the world came unto His own, He said, after an exposition of blessedness and exalted interior conduct in specific instances, Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. The Sermon on the Mount would be sadly incomplete if this keystone to the whole arch were missing.

In it is the same call to holiness as from the beginning. It suggests that all which preceded and all which comes after in the Sermon is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Were we to have anything short of this given us as our goal, it would be an indication that God thought us to be something less than His children. We have no surer proof that we are made in the image of God than this injunction to be holy because our God is holy. The thought is teeming with glorious implications.

In the first place it is the constant assurance to the individual that he is worth while. If he were not a potential part of wholeness, neither God nor man would be the richer for his success or poorer for his failure. But the fact that individual wholeness is a contribution to the wholeness or perfection of God's plan stings the soul into activity. This is something that the Bible refuses to let us get away from. There is no taint of compromise in its unvarying ideal. The vine and the branches, the body and the members, the temple and the living stones, and all other kindred teaching drive the thought home. Language has been exhausted in the endeavour to defend man from resting in the incomplete and to connect him with the entirety of life.

Then there is the thought of intimacy, personal and individual, which the wholeness of holiness involves. It is the cause and the soul of mysticism, finding expression in the simple piety of faith, and in the exalted experiences of richly endowed spiritual natures. The part nestles close to the whole, in order to partake of its health. The real wealth of life with God thus becomes a living fact to us. His holiness is at our disposal waiting for our appropriation. The sacraments refuse to be anything short of the imparting of God Himself and our rising to meet Him.

Still, again, it is a warning against the self-mutilation bound up with partial and prejudiced views of truth as a substitute for the Truth itself. If we feed on an ill-proportioned diet we run the risk of disease of more serious character than if we are simply on short rations. Worse still, it maims our power of self-giving and limits its scope. It confines us to a field of operation of our own choosing instead of launching us out into the glorious freedom of the children of God. To rest in the last illuminating thought that has inspired us, or, to do what is very frequent, to accept as the whole truth the single ray that brought us to ourselves and to God, to forget that what is our chief

asset is not what ripples along on the surface of our conscious life but that which permeates and sustains our subconscious life, is to endanger wholeness.

Finally, it is a death blow to the Puritanism that confuses a group of virtues with holiness, and wastes much valuable vitality in manufacturing artificial sins. A Puritan conscience impedes holiness as much as it aids it. The Puritan element has an invaluable place in the entire scheme of the religion of life, but it is a mischievous thing when it claims for itself rights and prerogatives which are beyond its powers to wield.

It has been maintained that "constantly striving for the unobtainable frequently results in neglect of important matters close at hand—such things as bread and cheese and children are neglected." This cannot be if we bear in mind the wholeness of holiness, Godward and manward.

II

It is the entire self that must strive after and claim holiness or health. For the moment let us deliberately lose sight of the difference in current meaning between the two synonyms. Heart, soul, mind, body, are the component parts of that unity called self or personality.

That which has to do with all has to do with each. Each shares in the others' losses or gains. It is not easy to find the dividing line between them, not even between the body and the soul. The normal condition of each and, of course, of all is that of wholeness or health. Nor is there doubt that the condition of any one of them affects all the others.

It is significant that when our Lord enunciated the first and great Commandment, He repeated before each of the words, heart, soul and mind, the world "all." The entireness or totality of self must pour itself out Godward. In the self-giving of all the heart and of all the soul and of all the mind to God is the certainty of ultimate holiness. As for the body, it will follow where the inner faculties determine. It becomes the adequate agent of spirit.

The New Testament is full of explicit messages to all four component elements of personality. The affections are to be set on high, not on things on the earth; it is in the heart that goodness is conceived. The soul (or life) finds itself by losing itself for Christ's sake; it is the chiefest of man's gifts to personality for which there can be no equivalent. The mind is charged in inspiring terms to think whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatso-

ever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, the mind has to think on these things. Even the body is reminded that it is nothing less than God's temple and that men can glorify God in their bodies.

It is a conviction of our day that the whole of man has not hitherto been brought into sufficiently close volitional contact with God and therefore the body becomes diseased. The mind thinks disease and so breeds disease—an indisputable fact in probably more cases than we can enumerate. This much has been established—the effect upon the body of inner health or disease is potent for good or for ill. There are also conditions of the body that eat into the moral and spiritual tissue. He who waves away the healing power of Christ as belonging only to early New Testament times is not preaching the whole Gospel. He was and is the Saviour of the body. God is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. He who in Jesus Christ healed by stimulating spiritual faculties to appropriate health is not dependent upon what doctors can do, nor helpless when doctors fail. The prayers in the Prayer Book touching sickness and disease are wretchedly inadequate, mournful and

halting. It is high time they were mended if they are to be used as vehicles for mending. Our Lord's words to the imprisoned Baptist are also for those of us who are in the prison of medical materialism—Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. According to thy faith be it unto thee.

As I write I see the whole pathetic body of the sick and diseased rising up and claiming their right to that sacrament of anointing which is denied them by Churches that should know better. Is it that we are afraid that it will not be effective for healing? If so it is an acknowledgment of weak faith. Anointing is the representative remedial act and sanctifies whatever physical treatment may be necessary. It ought to have behind it the sanction and blessing of the entire Church, and not be left to individuals to adopt on their own initiative. Often the only treatment, or at any rate the main treatment, needed for certain ailments is a spiritual challenge. According to thy faith be it unto thee. God is not the last resort in sickness: He is the first. He is not only the physician for great ills but also for small.

III

I would not dare speak about holiness in terms which surpass my personal experience unless in the same breath I could speak from joyous experience of the forgivingness and the forgiveness of God. His mercies are new every morning, and His compassion fails not. His forgivingness, or His permanent will to forgive, a disposition which has not to be opportuned into full activity before it operates, is no afterthought of His character. If He is the self-giver, the servant of mankind, He must be the forgiver. He gives not only full measure, pressed down, running over, all of which is implied in forgiveness, but also He gives in anticipation before we have any claim upon Him, except the claim of failure upon the Source of all victory. For-giveness is both fore-giveness and full-giveness. Our health is gone by our own act, the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint, and the Holy One comes and gives us of His health. The cost to Him is for ever held on high in the Cross of Calvary. Forgiveness is the most costly of all gifts because the most precious.

Sin is disease or absence of health or wholeness. The phrase sometimes used for the restoration of the sick is that they were made whole.

There are many aspects of sin, and the teaching of the Christian Church has made us familiar with them all. But for our immediate purpose it will be sufficient to view sin as the forfeiting of wholeness by choosing away or apart from the Holy One and those who in Him are holy. God's forgiveness is the lifting us back again into the relationships of health—with Himself and with his fellows. It is not surprising that the Church was given authority to forgive sins. It is the primary duty of the society that stands for health, the Holy Church, to give out of the abundance of its health to any member who falls ill morally or spiritually. It is as natural and right for the Church to dispense forgiveness as it is to share any other treasures it may possess. Here again lack of faith makes us hesitate to speak with assurance both in the name of the holy God and in the name of holy men. No Church is functioning right that is not dispensing absolution freely and constantly.

Forgiveness is, like other inner gifts, dependent for its efficacy upon the disposition to receive it. It must be used or its value is nullified. It expects much of the recipient. Tradition and usage have summed up all that is necessary in the word penitence, which is a disposition shaping itself into conduct, based upon the abandonment of

sin. God's forgivingness can never be exhausted, but by a light use of forgiveness power to appropriate it becomes depleted. Forgiven sin is forsaken sin, and the converse is equally true if, included in the forsaking, is as complete an undoing of the wrong as the sinner's power of choice can compass.

Modern psychology in many ways is justifying the age-long position of the Church. Take, for instance, the theory that until a certain "suppressed emotion," however remote, is definitely dealt with, depression, nervous debility, or whatever the morbid condition may be, cannot be relieved. In other words, when human nature has been violently dealt with at the springs of being, disease in the subconscious life is the penalty. Nothing short of subconscious treatment will suffice to get rid of both it and its operation. Wounds of the soul do not necessarily disappear by being forgotten. Their poison continues to work until they are subjected to forgiveness, which is a remedial process, both tender and severe, as well as a remedial act.

We are but beginning to understand the wholeness of life from the cradle to the grave. The career of a man is not a succession of more or less jerky acts: it is a continuous flow, so that all the past is always in the present. The past

cannot be obliterated, but where it constitutes a break it can be repaired, and where it constitutes a shame it can be transformed, by penitence and forgiveness.

It is not an uncommon thing to find men shy of associating themselves with the Church on the ground that they are in a scrape and that, inasmuch as they did not trouble institutions or ministers of religion when the times were fair, it would be rather a mean business to come to the Lord in their distress. There is in such an attitude a recognition that true religion is something more than a last resort. So far it has good in it. But it is obviously a wrong course if the Church be indwelt by the Spirit of Him who said, Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden. They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. It is by no means an unworthy motive to move Godward because of trouble. It is exactly what God has declared He desires and expects men to do.

It is, perhaps, a truism to say that incompleteness is best prevented, or, if we are suffering from it, best cured by cultivating a passion for wholeness. Walk in the spirit and you cannot fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The *Student in Arms* sums up the principle in a striking pas-

sage: "Let us be frank about this. . . . The only men who are pure are those who are absorbed in some pursuit, or possessed by a great love; whether it be the love of clean, wholesome life, which is religion, or the love of a noble man, which is hero-worship, or the love of a true woman. These are the four powers which are stronger than the 'flesh'—the zest of a quest, religion, hero-worship, and the love of a good woman. If a man is not possessed by one of these he will be immoral."

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God: therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

VIII

PURIFIED AS BY FIRE

Our age has an opportunity and a duty, superior to that of any moment of the world's past, to understand and master the mystery of suffering, for we in a supreme sense are being tried as by fire. May we so walk in the midst of the burning, fiery furnace that the men of to-morrow will be able to say that we came out of it purified and refined. In unprecedented volume and with unwonted fury, hot blasts of pain are sweeping over mankind in swift succession, sparing few and menacing all. There is no abatement in the operation of those cosmic processes which have made for suffering since the beginning of time, and whose origin does not spring from human sources. Then, too, the average amount of trouble clearly traceable to the weakness and wickedness of individuals and the plottings of groups of men continues. Superadded is this stupendous war which, drunken with the wine of young men's blood, infamous with its atrocities, foul with its corruptions, is engulfing mankind from east to west and from

pole to pole. Its massed suffering is colossal, so that the sensitive nature which opens its doors to it through fellow-feeling, understands more fully than ever before the meaning of the Atonement. There is no corner of being which it does not besiege and mutilate and destroy. Minds, characters and bodies are smitten and tortured out of human semblance. The tempest of battle is continuous and knows no rest. The world is writhing with pain. Every bullet that stills the beat of a soldier's pulse, speeds on until it reaches the heart of wife or mother, half the world away, and puts out the lamp of joy in many a life. The infamous, brutal abominations which enslave nations, torture men, ravish women, and, worst of all, despise and violate the sanctity of child-life, are mixing with the lives of myriads near and far, so that the vicarious suffering is as deep as the direct pang which shivers through its immediate victim. To-day every man but the arrant coward is suffering, not merely with his own petty aches and ailments, but more still with the writhing agony of the human race.

I

Now let us be honest with ourselves—indeed, how dare we be anything but honest in the

face of such horrors? Any claim that we, of any race of people whose heritage for generations has been one of privilege and illumination, are without culpability for the present chaos and its super-pain is as foolish as it is untrue. There are degrees of guilt, and whole nations have slowly risen from a position of neutrality or doubtfulness to a flaming conviction, finding flaming utterance, as to where the major responsibility lies. The super-man is the super-criminal. But this does not absolve us from recognizing and correcting our own grave defects. The fact that your neighbour is a highwayman and murderer does not justify you being a braggart and a snob. The pride, the boastfulness and, that most sinister of qualities, the snobishness of us Anglo-Saxons, have been and are active factors in world confusion. While reprobating and resisting unto death the unmeasured and immeasurable injustice which is endeavouring with fiendish persistence, and also with the impotence of an Instans Tyrranus, to squeeze out the life of Belgium and Serbia, and to annihilate the Polish and the Armenian races, let us abjure self-righteousness and court self-criticism concerning our own faulty career.

Behind and at the root of the fiery trial of the moment are national and individual faults

of temper, which leave us guilty before the bar of God and of history. They are so grave that, as in the past they have brought great democracies to the verge of open conflict, so in the future they will actually precipitate and invite the scourge of war unless we deal with them in unsparing fashion. Democracy is not and cannot be its own security. Its very existence depends upon the character and temper of the people who compose it. It is nothing but a single principle. Used aright it is a unitive force and a friend of liberty, but in the hands of an unenlightened and selfish people it is a menace of major proportions. Of all corrupt governments, there is nothing equal to the corruption of a corrupt democracy.

This is no digression. It is pertinent to the moment and to the discussion. We are seeking a way to preclude the repetition of such horrors as those which are now our daily diet. We are determined upon eliminating war from the scheme of life. Democracy is the watchword of the day. But in itself and by itself it can do nothing but disappoint our hopes, unless we briskly set to work to clean its skirts from the stains which defile it—its hypocrisies, its venalities, its corruptions, its graft, its aristocratic spirit, its self-righteousness. Democracy as it

has been is a pale ghost of what it must become if it is to bar the door of mankind to war.

Nor may we wait till to-morrow, when at last peace lets her gentle mantle fall upon the maimed and panting world. There can be no days of reconstruction which have not their roots deep in the present. There is no moment like now in which to get rid of patent national vices, like covetousness expressed in legislation, getting revenue from vice, mitigating and permitting graft for the sake of political ease, grinding the faces of the poor and all the while prating about liberty, condoning vice because it is gilded.

These are the most important days of reconstruction, and unless national democracies mend their ways a world-wide democracy can be nothing better than a doubtful blessing. Each new epoch has had its panacea for the major ills of the human race, from the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire to the Reformation, and from the Reformation until now. There is no panacea but wholeness, in which impartial recognition is given to the entire wealth of God and His purposes. Let us pursue the development of democracy by all means, but let us pursue it as a single factor in a whole army of principles of equal cogency.

Every word that has been said about the whole-

ness of democracy is true about the Church. In plain language, she is at war within herself. Much of the anguish of soul, of the doubt, of the alienation of men from the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, lies at the door of the broken condition of the Church, her uncatholic temper, and her apathetic acceptance of the divisions which rend her as though they were not her own fault. It is encouraging to find that there is an increasing discontent with the intolerable conditions which obtain, and a feeling after the remedy for our provincialism and incompleteness. We needed this monstrous war to purge the Church of her belligerency and dilettantism. It is forcing us to a recognition of unpalatable fact.

We must not take for granted that this premier, or any outstanding, trial by fire is going to do any good unless we deliberately will that it should, and line up our activities with our purpose. "If when silence comes down on a decimated, an exhausted, a bankrupt world, the old ways are sought out again and men go on as before, then the myriad lives and the dreary rain of tears are indeed a vain oblation, and all will be to do over again. God sets no lesson that need not be learned, and unless out of it all comes an old heaven and a new earth, then

the lesson is set again, as time after time it was set for imperial Rome, until a century of war and pestilence and famine broke down her insolent pride and made from the ruins of her vain glory a foundation for a new civilization in the strength of the Christianity she had denied." We want the fire to burn, we beg of it to burn, we put ourselves in the way of the burning, that the unclean in us may be cleansed, and that the steel in us may be tempered like a Damascus blade. Suffering is ready to be milked by courageous and steady hands, but it will not yield a drop of nourishment to the dilettante or the coward.

II

There are few of us who have not learned by experience the remedial value of suffering when we have used it as a sacrament. It is astonishing how evanescent the memory of pain is, both in its acute and in its more prolonged forms, and how living a thing is the deposit made by a right correspondence with the opportunity hidden in the heart of suffering. This latter softens the disposition of that which at the moment seemed like unrelieved disaster and, as we look back, gives a benign expression to its severe countenance. To the growing character

all his past suffering is a distinct asset, and from none of it would he be separated. He would not, if he could, eliminate a single pang.

The memory of past suffering and its deposit is varied. First and highest stands the vicarious suffering by which we lived in the lives of others and, without fault ourselves, shared the shame and sorrow of others, or else entered into the rich experience of blameless sufferers. Perhaps there is no pain quite like it for intensity. Then there comes the sharing of the common lot in which we receive our due portion of harsh treatment at the rough hand of those relentless forces which are resident in the nature of which we are a part. Some, many, there are who appear to be afflicted beyond measure and without apparent reason. The disparity of suffering is one of the most baffling features of the mystery and would be a fatal one were it not that the most perfect, the one altogether perfect, representative of the human family was afflicted beyond His brethren of every age, and not only took no hurt but even reaped a golden harvest for the world from the field of His suffering. With His stripes we are healed.

And then there are the pangs which we can trace directly to our own fault, and which are nothing more or less than the chastising of the

benignly austere hand of God. It is an indignity to the character of God as love to separate penalties for wrong-doing from His direct, purposeful operation. I would rather take a thousand lashes from the hand of love than a single stroke from Fate or mere Justice. The lash of love has wholeness for the culprit as its aim. Fate hits blindly and without purpose. Mere Justice exacts retribution.

It is a puzzle to me why men should assume that pure love is without pain and does not inflict pain. We can know love as it is only by examining it as it reveals itself in the manifestations of God in our own sphere. It is unscientific of science to study love as a theory apart from the data in hand. If we resort to speculative thought, I can dimly see how in an eternal character the counterpart of pain or the reality of which pain is the shadow and symbol is a necessity, but it is so bound up with the whole that every pang is an ecstatic note in joy. It is the lack of immediacy, the discipline of waiting, that pain of pains, which casts doubt over the function of suffering. When the imagination soars above time, which after all is only the standard of measurement in terms of a planetary system, of a part instead of the whole, it is quite possible to think of all the cumulative suffering

of the ages of mortality becoming a glittering ray of joy, as the sun, the responsible agent of time, winds up his affairs and hands his record to God.

The sign of the Cross is eternal and can never be wiped out. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is inherent in Godhead. There is a timeless element in suffering. Even here and now we have moments of joy which are so intense that they shiver with pain, and in retrospect we find it hard to separate the pain and the blessing into which the pain eventually resolved its discord. Studied as a thing apart, as an entity in itself, as a mere ingredient of time, pain is an evil. But give it its proper place in the whole scheme of love and it becomes not only bearable but also desirable in the process making for completeness.

Ask the Belgian whether, in the light of subsequent events, he regrets that he refused to lie down in passive slavery to the infamous demand of Teuton ambition, and what will he say? His triumphant No climbs to the stars and shakes heaven itself. Men are already saying that the two great events of the war are the resistance of Belgium, and Gallipoli, where the immortal will of man willed to dare an undertaking beyond its power and honoured itself in

the failure. Gallipoli was the Charge of the Six Hundred multiplied by a hundred.

Ask the women of Portsmouth who, when it was announced that all but a handful of their husbands and sweethearts had gone gallantly to God by way of the sea, broke spontaneously into *Rule, Britannia!*—ask them if they would call their heroes from the ocean depths in order that their lives may be easier and smoother? Their negative will have no tremor in its trumpet note.

Ask America as she feels the iron entering into her soul if she wishes to draw back or whether she will go on with invincible spirit laying her best on the altar of sacrifice. Her answer is embodied in her unswerving course toward the goal. If she has any regret it is that she chose the common lot of her Allies late rather than early. And so it goes. Even in time there is enough of the eternal to enable us to see in retrospect—also in anticipation—that pain is an asset too precious to be separated from.

The mystic sense or element in man is not the property of a few. All of us have it. It is the heart and soul of idealism. The prospect of adventure, and of trouble, and of suffering, does not deter the youth of our day from advancing in cohorts upon the hosts of evil. Dimly in most hearts, clearly in some, exultantly in a

few, our lads stream out to war not to destroy the power of a visible foe alone but to smite a vicious principle. They know that their wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Consequently we must not preach to them democracy alone as though that had sufficient inspiring force, or nationalism, or internationalism, or a sectarian Church. They are ready for something greater and grander, and if the demand is made of them they will put on the whole armour of God, and having done all will stand.

III

It seems almost like saying that blindness is a vantage ground for the exercise of sight to claim that never in human experience had an age the chance to see and measure realities like that which we have. But it is so. The illuminating power of trouble and suffering make it a very mount of vision.

The things which can be shaken are shaken and the stable and unchangeable abide. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews could never have produced his understanding treatise on suf-

fering and God's relation to it except from the house of pain and during an age of palpitating uncertainty. His picture of victory by faith is in every line of it the child of pain. Nor, I am convinced, could the disciple whom Jesus loved have made his spiritual pilgrimage as recorded in the Revelation had his lot been one of home comforts and freedom from anxiety. His exile in the lonely isle of Patmos gave him the rich opportunity which his rich nature seized, and he made the desert to blossom as a rose.

Our Lord seems to lay down the principle that spiritual vision is in inverse ratio to the ease and calmness of prosperity and peace. Its height is reached when the confusion of the universe excels what we ourselves are familiar with. After a description of horrors which spread over the face of earth and sky he says: Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh. If I interpret this aright, it means that we of to-day have a chance to get into intimate relationship with the living God in Jesus Christ such as cannot well be surpassed. In part it is that we are driven by the stress of the moment away from that which is unstable to that which

is secure, and that being stripped of the veil of material comforts and lifted out of the fog of side issues we are in a clear and unimpeded air in which the heavens press themselves on our gaze. At any rate, whatever the metaphysic of it all be, the day is one of fine and true idealism which enables us to endure because of the joy that is set before us.

I am not trying to deal exhaustively with suffering, or to speculate on how much superior a world God would have made if He had only waited for some of the modern rationalists to advise Him. I am trying to reach fundamental principles that may prove solid ground for slipping feet. The great mass of unmerited and meaningless pain which belongs to the human race cannot be dealt with in detail. But of it may be said two things. First, supposing men go under from the excessive weight of suffering, what then? The bruised reed will He not break, the smoking flax will He not quench. For every pang of seemingly wanton or unmerited pain in time, God has double compensation in timelessness. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. The sufferings are outward, the glory is inward. You cannot consider the question of suffering except in relation to

God's whole self and whole scheme. In the second place—and this is the all-encompassing argument, the irrefutable logic, which enables us to accept what we cannot understand—the pain Giver in Jesus Christ reveals Himself to be the pain Bearer. God thus stoops His shoulders to His own austerities and learns, through suffering, obedience to His own laws. If He, then why not we?

O what great troubles and adversities hast Thou showed me! and yet didst Thou turn and refresh me: yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again. Praised be God for His disciplines! It is good for me that I have been in trouble. Thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind, but out of the austerities of Thy love have come visions of hope and encouragement. I thank Thee that Thy fire is a purifying fire and that Thou dost not chastise to destroy, but to build up and save to the uttermost.

IX

THE LAST GREAT ADVENTURE

THE last great adventure is the phrase by which a man once described death as applied to himself, when the disabled ship, on which he was, plunged to her doom. We can understand how gallant a heart it was to whose lips these words sprang instinctively when he was suddenly called upon to die. He was not an ecclesiastic or a religionist. He was an actor.

I

That is exactly what death is—not something apart from or hostile to life, but the final stage in the experience of mortality. If we have been walking by faith, that is to say, making each day a new adventure into the unknown, death cannot take us by surprise or do anything worse than challenge us to move into the inevitable as though it were our deliberate choice. A man can never choose death for death's sake. That is suicide, the largest insult to human nature which can be offered. It is due to the fear of living. There is no temper of soul more hor-

rifying and cowardly than fear of living. Here is the classic description of its ultimate fate. The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and pining of soul; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life; in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

The fear of living is always due to a single cause, the deliberate refusal to accept life as a high-hearted adventure in the name of God and for the sake of mankind. It takes its beginnings in shirking duty, in seeking ease, in sheltering self. Its cure consists in flinging self-protection to the winds and trusting oneself to some big scheme, the bigger the better, of a sort of which we are assured God will not be ashamed. Many a man's life has been suddenly simplified and given point to by the call of humanity for help in the war. There has happened to him what happened to a character in modern fiction. His course "was simple because he now took no thought of what would happen to himself;—that no longer even interested him,—he was thinking only of what he ought to do. And

strangely enough, while he was not considering his own needs, he knew without any doubt what he ought to do for others." It is the old story of losing life to save it.

The awful fate of fearing to live was something our Lord meets. He urges upon us not to give ourselves up to anxious thoughts for material needs or the contents of to-morrow. God removes all the menace there may be in them without the help of perturbed or gloomy anticipations. Indeed, most of the terrors of the unknown are those we inject into them by our timorous proleptic disposition. It is the completeness of God's grasp of affairs that is our assurance that we can trust Him to look after His business, provided we do not thwart Him by trying to do it for Him, and if we attend to our own. We have a right to become solicitous for the future and for the condition of mankind only to the extent we are responsible for it. Solicitude for others, their present and future, meets with no rebuke from God. Such solicitude is but a phase of love and is the parent of remedial and saving effort on our part. It has its suffering, of course, for it is signed powerfully and deeply with the sign of the Cross, but it is not a disease, like self-solicitude is; it is a vitality.

Self-saving is a process of death; saving others a process of life. Consequently the self-saver must be afraid to live, for life is his antipode. The saviour of others cannot be afraid to live, for his sole business is life and abundant life. The self-saver must be afraid to die because he is not experienced in adventure into any sphere where he cannot handle affairs to his own advantage. He fears what lies lurking in the unknown. It is full of possible enemies and terrors. The saviour of others cannot be afraid to die because having died daily, he is skilled in the practice of immortality. His large experience in adventure has revealed to him the glory of the unknown, so that he is assured that behind the last great adventure is the grandest and best part of life. For him there can be no shadows or terrifying foes in any realm presided over by his Father, in whom and from whom are all things.

St. Paul, who is a master of simplicity where he is not a master of obscurity, gets at the root of the matter in brief and simple language. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stead-

fast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.

II

In these days, when the beat of the wings of the angel of death is ever sounding in our ears, and when daily, hourly, whole legions of young men are, to use the stock phrase, going before their time, in the sense of dying with but few years to their credit, it is our duty to look at the unfearful side of death. Let it be said, with the glorious certainty that belongs to the assertion, death in its Christian character is a superb victory, crowning all the victories of life. As a natural process it is the direct act of God, long antedating man's appearance on earth. It is the counterpart in man of that spring seedtime when the corn of wheat is joyously put into the ground that the world may be clothed in verdure and beauty and nourishment. It belongs to the same category as birth, and—I am not speaking of the process of dying which is slow and painful often—is less painful. Its sinister and inimical character is that which becomes attached to it by human self-will, which is disobedience to God and the source of all wicked-

ness. It is hostile to-day only so far as we choose to make it so. The terror of death is in ourselves rather than in death. Christ made clear by illustration that in Him death was a new upward and onward stride. Apart from life as a Son of God it is animal dissolution. As the last experience, like birth a sort of boundary experience, of the life of a Son of God it is spiritual transfiguration. St. Francis, the most healthy-minded of saints, spoke of his sister, the death of the body. The only death which he considered hostile was the death of sin—soul death.

I believe that it is the horror and fear of dying that is our chief trouble. The protracted suffering, the fading faculties, the repulsiveness of the natural processes, lead us astray. Probably all of us would choose, if we were allowed to, the manner of our going. We would prefer to stride out quickly at an opportune moment. We would avoid the autumnal method for ourselves and others. But the autumn, the canker and the storm are for men as for trees. Whatever the guise in which death greets us, death is in itself never more and never less than death. To the person concerned, the disfigurement and physical mutilation of war probably means a much speedier and less tedious entrance into

the last great adventure than if he had lived to succumb to disease. Our over-careful preservation of the dust of the dead is receiving a shock, a needed shock to-day, when frequently no dust is found to care for.

> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is for ever England. There shall be
> In that rich earth a richer dust conceal'd;
> A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
> Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam.

The dust which is part of the great world even when it is animated by a living soul, cannot be kept from mingling with mother earth. We can label it as though we were cheating her of her own, but it is only a label. There is something fine in the thought that the whole earth or the whole sea is the grave of gallant men who gave their lives for the whole and for the holy. Who could choose for Kitchener a more appropriate grave than the transparent, calm depths of the great ocean!

The moment is an opportune one in which to get a truer and more wholesome and more whole view of death than that which ordinarily prevails. There is too much black about Christian death. If for us it is a hard discipline to say good-bye for a while, the going from earth marks a gala day for the one who goes. The house of

death should abjure the artificial. The tone of triumph should dominate our farewell. We cannot force ourselves into this temper of mind, but it will follow on as the logical result of a Christian view of death.

The mournful death is that which is due to our own fault, the death that snatched away the sinner in his sin. Even here the mercy of the Father rises and overshadows the weak and erring child. The Fatherhood of God is as potent in death and after as it is in life.

We can afford to leave the time and the manner of death to Him Who is the Conqueror of death. We should shut our minds to a consideration of these elements over which we have no control. Brooding over these diseases of the imagination, frequently it induces or aids processes which end in physical disablement. There is among the soldiers at the front a rather fine type of fatalism which is not fearful but trustful.

> Through joy and blindness he shall know,
> Not caring much to know, that still
> Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
> That it be not the Destined Will.

III

I have wondered at times whether the Church has not over-mysticized the conception of life

beyond the grave, and, in so doing, made death not an incident but a break in life. The book of the Apocalypse is the basis of most pictures of the other world. Its oriental colour and richness, its deep symbolism, its figurative mode of expression are foreign to Western thought and method. It has not been translated enough, and we have failed to get the purport of its mystical measures. Our untrained imaginations have fallen a prey to literalism. I am not objecting to the glow of mystery which is part of the charm and part of the reality of any attempt to depict that which is interior to and beyond our life and experience. Nor is it desirable to express the other world in terms of this. What is necessary, however, is to leave no room to men to suppose that after death they are any different than they were before in their inmost self, to accentuate the continuity of life, and to keep all artificiality out of the picture of the great beyond.

The first and best illustration of the effect upon personality of death is found in Jesus Christ. After His reappearance from the grave He is unaltered in character, tone of thought and fundamental relationships. He is the Son of Man that He was, with widened scope and powers, and freedom from, in the best sense of the word,

unnaturalness. The life of His companions fits into His and His into theirs. What strikes one forcibly is the absence of anything like a break in the continuity of His personality.

If we think of death as an introduction into conditions wholly foreign and unsuited to human nature, death must be something to be feared. It is unwonted in that it is untried. But it is thoroughly human in that it is part of universal human experience. It is suited to us. It is the next thing we need when we have finished here. Our Lord promises by His own representative career what will happen to us. Of course the Resurrection and all it means still lies beyond, but the interim period is as well fitted to human life as the post-Resurrection period.

Dante does a great service in the *Divine Comedy* by his method. He carries earth down to the Inferno and up to the Purgatorio and the Paradiso. The language used and the country depicted are such as are familiar. The mystical is not absent, but it is not overwhelming. As we think of the multitudes of our own generation who are going into the other world in close comradeship, it will be well for us to consider the wholeness of life, and, whatever new and developed features there may be, how fitted it is for those who are entering it. A friend, in

full view of the great change, once wrote me: "Paradise by every description is a nice place, and it's a wonder how reluctant most of us Christians are to go there. This is a jolly old world full of discouragement and joy, pain and triumph, a continual riddle and paradox—which is one of the things which makes it interesting. . . . The thought is overwhelming that by the time you get this letter . . . I may know more than you do about lots of things."

Then as to our nearer relationship with God. We use the phrase Beatific Vision to indicate that complete realization of God's presence and our nearness to Him which is the greatest gift of heaven. After death the earliest impact of God, so to speak, will be His self-giving, His tender love. A little while since a child lay dying, and exclaimed: "I see the good God and He is so gentle to me. I want to pray." Then later: "This is a beautiful house, I think I shall stay here,"—the child spoke profound truth to the age to which she belonged for so short a moment. The other world which welcomed her was a place prepared for her, and God was chiefly gentle.

Julian of Norwich is always eloquent on this last point. In her Sixth Revelation, which is one of the choicest, she pictures God's appre-

ciation of what His children do. "The good Lord said: *I thank thee for thy travail, and especially for thy youth.*" Her vision is of our Lord as lord in His own house entertaining His dear worthy servants and friends at a stately feast. His humility is the first thing she noticed—the Lord took no place in His house, but He reigned there royally, filling it full of joy and mirth, "Himself endlessly to gladden and to solace His dear worthy friends, full homely and full courteously, with marvellous melody of endless love, in His own fair blessed countenance." Then she describes the three degrees of bliss that every "soul shall have in heaven that willingly served God in any degree on earth." The first is the worshipful thanks of our Lord God—you see He is not exacting but giving—the second is that the thanks are made publicly in the presence of all Heaven. "A king, if he thank his servants, it is a great worship to them, and if he maketh it known to all the realm, then is the worship greatly increased." And the third is, that "as new and as gladdening as it is received in that time, right so shall it last without end."

It is not because I believe there is absence of discipline beyond the grave when we have achieved the last adventure that I have given

chief place to the gentle courtesy of God, but because the thought of God's austerity can be borne only upon the background of His mercy. Such discipline there is. I know I shall need it. Our own sense of justice will welcome it. Whatever it may be we have no reason to fear it, for it will be but a single element in the great bath of God's love which will receive us, and will be exactly that which we need to shape us into the sort of persons we most desire to be. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.

We bless Thy holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear; beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.

X

THE CITY THAT LIETH FOURSQUARE

THE child-mind would probably find the atmosphere of a city that lieth foursquare somewhat heavy and its space cramped. There is not enough of the out-of-doors about it. High walls and measured spaces do not seem consonant with freedom.

But of course the symbolism is the opposite of exclusiveness and restriction. It is completeness and symmetry. Even our physical life rebels against anything suggesting confinement. A sky above us any lower than the blue dome, which is our generous covering, would be unbearable. A few days of fog and cloud teach us that. It is essential that we should always have the consciousness that boundlessness stretches upward, above and beyond anything that limits or confines. There can be no lid on either the world or heaven. And a round world that has horizons which retreat as rapidly as we advance is also a necessity. Even supposing a flat world had almost an indefinite stretch of space before

you reached its final boundary, the consciousness that there was a boundary would imprison us. The assurance that there is out-of-doors beyond the walls of our home, be it hut or palace, gives us that sense of freedom that is part of wholeness. This is another evidence that we belong to the universe and the universe to us.

If there is a touch of timelessness in man, there is also a touch of spacelessness. Consequently, when we try to get vision of the consummation of God's purposes, there must be eternity and infinity to satisfy us. It is only those who have become so engrossed in short views of life as, for the time being, to be blind to anything else, who do not find the need of some sense of God's mighty purpose as a daily support. Even with them there is that undercurrent of immortality which lends its aid when they are least conscious of it. The man who has the most tedious job can do it with zest if he is able to realize that it is an important part of a great scheme. On the other hand, those who are given large responsibilities can rise no higher than a mechanical fulfilment of them unless the inspiring force comes from what I have termed an out-of-door conception of life. The part must be in relation to the whole. Detach any undertaking, whether the manufacture of a piston-rod

or the ordered completeness of any given organization, from the end for which it was set in operation, and it becomes valueless and unworthy of the attention of men. Apply this principle to the world and mankind and you will get a whole view of the human situation. Eschatology, which means the philosophy of finalities, is as essential to a rounded view of life as is the study of origins. Such study or any findings of physical science apart from a search for the ultimate purpose of God in creation, would be as meaningless and worthless as a piston-rod without an engine.

Doubtless most men, when they allow time for serious thinking, dimly believe that there is some far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves. But unless it is pressed on their attention they do not easily apprehend that their effectiveness in their own local job, and their own inspiration in its performance, is in proportion to their clearness of vision of God's complete and ultimate plan. A visionless development of material resources and an enslavement of the secrets of the universe for our immediate enjoyment ends in "science without a soul." And if this war is being fought solely with a view to compass temporal ends, however lofty, it lacks sufficient motive and justification.

The least little scrap of humanity, the urchin

of the streets, and the most influential and conspicuous leader of men, have alike the capacity and the right to know that there is a final goal and of what sort it is. The hymns of early childhood which open up limitless spaces and beauty to the child-mind are elements in giving the young the legitimate freedom. The constant pressing upon adult attention of the other world and the end of all things, not only has the sanction and example of Scripture, but also finds its justification in that craving for wholeness which is inherent in us. We must not be allowed to forget that here there is no continuing city. If we do, life is jolted out of perspective and the scale of values goes all awry.

This is a moment in which we should compel men to recognize that God has an ultimate and worthy purpose for mankind, and as far as may be, help them to see it. It is not a mere saving of the individual, though it includes that. It is something which can be expressed in terms of the nation, though the nation's fate, too, is included. Nor can the word democracy with its largest connotations satisfy the requirements of the case, though democracy also has its part to play in the whole. Even the establishment on earth of universal peace and righteousness is incomplete and provincial by the side of what

God purposes and the instinct of the human soul expects and demands. It is something which, except in allegory, cannot find expression in terms of our planetary system, and the little conceit of time for which the sun is responsible. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to perceive the good things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

I

The City that lieth foursquare is the home of an ordered society, big enough for redeemed mankind, for it is complete and whole with the completeness and holiness of God. The kingdom of God, noble phrase! is the measure of the City. This kingdom is so humble and lowly that it can be and is within us. It is so comprehensive that it can contain mankind, and yet there is room. The capacity for sight is so great in one human soul that we can hold within ourselves the world that holds us. Perhaps this very fact is a testimony to the greatness of the kingdom of God—certainly it bears witness to the fitness of that kingdom for our make up.

One of the just demands that the human heart urges is that the ultimate abode of men should

be thoroughly human. By that I mean that every feature of the life shall respond to the expectation of every feature of our nature in its highest development. So the social aspect of Heaven is symbolized by the great multitude which no man could number. Men move up thither, with, as it would seem and as we would expect, the acuteness of self-consciousness worn down by a corporate consciousness which transcends our experience because of its vastness and its unity. The self-giving element rushes through the whole, vertically and horizontally, in full and pure stream. Racial and national characteristics and achievement are seen there, and lend special value to the whole. In other words, there is there all that which on earth we are trying to bring about in national life and in our scheme for a league of nations forming a commonwealth of mankind. Magnitude and order, according to Aristotle, make beauty. So that in Heaven there will be the satisfaction, according to the philosopher's definition, of a beauty which we yearn for, but which is out of reach because of the smallness of earth's population at any one time, even supposing we were able to secure order among those who were here.

Putting the completeness of the social life of Heaven over against the human normality of

the Christ who had passed through death, and you have such a human society as would satisfy the idealism of ultra-Utopians. It is not unimportant to give emphasis to the fact that this society is human. Our life here with its temporal and temporary occupations and interests is not going to be magically changed into something quite different when death shall have waved his wand for the last time. The flow and continuity of human character is no more dislocated by death than it is by sleep. Everything worthy here, down to the playing of the boys and girls in the street, has its counterpart and full inwardness there.

If I do not draw any sharp line of demarcation between Paradise and Heaven it is because Scripture does not encourage it or show me how. The suggestive value of Paradise is in its protection of the principle of growth or development which is so distinctively human. Whatever cataclysmic elements there are in life, they are a climax, a part of normal growth, and not a mere introduction of a foreign or interfering and explosive power. As Bergson has established, life is not cinematographic either in short or big jerks. It is a steady flow through mortality and death, and intermediacy and beyond. So when I speak of the society of Heaven I refer

to the whole stretch of human life the other side of the grave.

II

That society is the major part of the human whole. It already exists. It is the greatest social reality there is, this City that lieth foursquare. Its white company is composed of all mankind since the first man, who have set their course thither and made it their deliberate and reiterated choice. In them history suddenly springs full-fledged into present life. It is no longer a tortuous procession winding through the vale of time, but a compact society, unified by a common motive, enjoying a fellowship of limitless extent and unmeasured richness. The commonwealth of mankind is a fact that is the most towering of all realities after God Himself. Not a passing pageant like the nations of earth, it is permanent, for the city hath foundations builded of God. God has not stumbled in His purpose. The eccentricities and limitations of time have not blocked Him in His onward march with His children folded to His breast. They are all there in unnumbered throng. Not one of them is lost or misplaced.

As for our society on earth with its jangling discords and frayed ends, it is to the great white

company, a handbreadth away, as a murky lowland stream to the clean ocean. Men who have striven for well-ordered cities and states and a peaceful world, have there that for which they have striven. There is no principle of order or culture or beauty or fellowship which we hold precious on earth that is not in triumphant operation in Heaven.

The wonderful thing is that this marvellous society is man's handiwork in close co-operation with God's. We are building it to-day as the men of yesterday built, each our share and portion.

> For an ye heard a music, like enow
> They are building still, seeing the city is built
> To music, therefore never built at all,
> And therefore built for ever.

We must not take too seriously or too sadly the failures to perfect our hopes and plans on earth, as long as our conviction that God intends for us eventually to enter a complete life abides unmarred, and our efforts toward that life persevere. The cross proclaims that we can, if we so choose, reign through defeat, and that that for which we have striven makes its full deposit only the other side of death. When we aim to make ourselves and society whole, and set our lives upon our aim, failure is impossible. If we

were to fail, God's throne would totter and the City that lieth foursquare dissolve. It is only the impatience of the mortal in us that lures us to despair and leads us out into the wilderness to die with inert hands, because the new sown grain refused to bear fruit in a night, and we expected one nation or one generation—or perhaps one little man!—to build the complete City in a day and to make Heaven unnecessary by converting earth into Heaven. Heaven must first live in the soul if the soul is to live in Heaven. Our chief responsibility on earth is not only to defend our vision of God and God's place from the blight of doubt, but also to commit ourselves to it more unreservedly to-day than yesterday. It is this that enables us to do the two things our high destiny requires of us. To contribute to the passing structure of mortal society something that will strengthen and invigorate, even if it does not perfect it. And to carry on in, rather than with, as a deposit of value for the City that lieth foursquare.

That City is so dependent upon us for a worthy contribution that without us it cannot lie quite four-square. To go to the City without any trophy of our own winning would be humiliating. Even the lowliest and least endowed member of a family is ashamed to rejoice in the privileges

built up by the activities of his parents and brethren without making some contribution of love, however tiny, to the common treasury. Only those well skilled in self-giving would be at home in a City where the sole competition is a vying with one another in the practice of love, and where the light which lightens the inhabitants is the Lamb Who laid down His life for mankind.

The society for which we are struggling, therefore, cannot be realized in the nation, and not even in mankind, either to-day or to-morrow, any more than it was realized yesterday. For we are not creatures of time strutting across the tiny stage of space with imperial tread. We are the builders of the City that lieth foursquare. There is our ultimate goal, and all our schemes and efforts here must be directed toward it and, in all our motives and methods, be referred to it. The mankind of a day, even, is not a large enough unit in the terms of which to express our national character. When we talk of doing things for humanity's sake we mean for the whole race, reaching backwards and forwards and gathering up in its torrent the little present by means of which we make our offering.

Whether it be times of war or of peace our *modus operandi* must be such as will stand the

test of life in the City that lieth foursquare. An *ad interim* religion for war time is as inconsistent as it would be for days of peace. To make terms with vice as a necessity of war is as abhorrent to an honest mind as any other compact with the devil. The one thing that gives war any place or justification in human affairs is that its soldiers are called to play their part with mind and body kept clean and ready for the pouring out of the soul into sacrificial death for a holy cause, and that all the forces of the nation, official and unofficial, are pledged to throw arms of protection and support about them.

III

We must not allow our contemplation of the complete order of the City that lieth foursquare to exclude our social whole on earth, for the link that binds the one to the other is organic, vital and intimate. The "here" is the "there" in the process of becoming. All that vast multitude which composes the majority of the race from the beginning has been able to reach the goal only by the way we are now treading. When they went to the City that lieth foursquare, they did not lose any of the fragrance in which life on earth is rich, but carried it with

them. The tie that binds us together is the tie of a common lot lived out with a common purpose, which purpose still animates both those who are there and those who are here. There memories of the past are quickened rather than dimmed by timelessness, for all their "then" is in their "now." That their vitality is shared with us, I am sure. The deposit they left on earth is our chief asset. On it we build our own contribution. What direct efforts they are making for our edification and encouragement, to what extent an individual hand there touches a life here, does not appear. But the self-giving of the whole rushes earthward through generous arteries, and gives us nourishment and cheer. We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses—not idle observers but sympathetic brethren.

There is a query to-day as to whether, except in mystical fashion, there can be inter-communion between ourselves and our friends yonder. Love chafes under the discipline of silence, and seeks to break its bars. Psychic phenomena are being called in to lend their aid and to produce voices of comfort. They are studied and employed in the name of science, and must be scientifically judged. They can be said to emanate from the spirit world only by ignoring

the more probable hypothesis that they are the self-induced utterances of our own desires, stored memories, and thought transference, evoked from that subconscious life which is an established fact of science. Until they are excluded from all possibility of finding their explanation in this or any other cause, it is an unwarranted conclusion to attribute them to disembodied spirits. As phenomena opening up a new sphere for psychological study they are interesting. As means of communicating with the world of spirits they are doubtful, perilous and unprofitable. He would indeed be rash who maintained that there are not degrees of nearness between the society of earth and that of the life beyond the grave, and that there has been no vocal or visible interchange of confidences between the two parts of the organic whole. But it is safe to say that such intercommunication is not the norm.

The veil that shuts out God and the deep things of God on earth from touch and sight and hearing is not lifted when men shed their material self, and climb to that fuller life of God which takes them from our conscious sphere. It is sufficient to know that the unlonely God has gathered them close to Him, and that in turning to Him we reach them, inevitably and securely. It is the mystical part of life that is

the deepest. By means of it we apprehend Him, and through it He communicates with us. The logical presupposition, a presupposition supported by the experience of the ages, is that so far as those who are absent from the body can communicate with those of us who remain, it is normally through the same mystical faculty or element of our nature.

The last figure of Revelation is the first. Alpha is Omega, unchanged, unchangeable. He who is the source must be the goal of life. When all is said and done, when the words of the wise have exhausted themselves in trying to give suitable expression to the cravings and the capacity of human life, we turn to the inexhaustible wealth of God in whom alone is our sufficiency. He is all in all. His holiness is our wholeness.

The fullest vision of Him of which we are now capable is only an earnest of that which is to be. But in this we can rest secure that in future manifestations of Himself God will not surprise us by suddenly showing Himself to be something contrary to the basic revelation of His character. The groundwork of the Cross holds all the rest in its safe keeping. And all the comings of Jesus Christ in, and at the close of, time will be in loving self-giving even though they be in clouds and great glory. For His

glorious Majesty, too, will bear the sign of the Cross.

THE CANTICLE OF THE SUN

O most high, almighty, good Lord God, to Thee belong praise, glory, honour, and all blessing!

Praised be my Lord God with all His creatures, and especially our brother the sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light; fair is he and shines with very great splendour; O Lord, he signifies to us Thee!

Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, the which He has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather by the which Thou upholdest life in all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble and precious and clean.

Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom Thou givest us light in the darkness; and he is bright and pleasant and very mighty and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, the which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth the divers fruits, and flowers of many colours, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for His love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, for Thou, O most Highest, shalt give them a crown.

Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from which no man escapeth.

Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin!

Blest are they who are found walking by Thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise ye and bless the Lord, and give thanks unto Him and serve Him with great humility.

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